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**AN EXPLORATION OF BILINGUAL (WELSH-ENGLISH) COUNSELLORS'  
EXPERIENCES OF COUNSELLING IN A MOTHER TONGUE AND IN A  
NON-MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE**

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## **Abstract**

This research investigates the experiences of bilingual (Welsh-English) counsellors providing therapy in their mother tongue (Welsh) and in their non-mother tongue (English). The data was gathered from an in-depth semi-structured interview with five participants from North and West Wales who described Welsh as their mother tongue and it was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings demonstrated that the therapists recognised differences when counselling in Welsh and in English. The participants experienced a different sense of self depending on the language spoken and described a pre-existing understanding and sense of ease that emerged when they counselled clients who shared the same mother tongue as themselves. Consequently, this facilitated the development of safety and trust that arose when they provided therapy to clients in their first language. The results highlighted how the familiarity of the language of training and the passage of time benefits how the therapists conceptualise their counselling abilities. The study found that aspects such as the therapists' lack of linguistic proficiency and a need to make an extra effort in their less familiar and/or less confident languages can hinder the counselling relationship. However the research demonstrated that their bilingualism enhanced the therapy by offering more flexibility and choice to clients. These findings support existing literature on the topic and also provide new insights into Welsh first language therapists' experiences of working bilingually.

## **Declaration**

The work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any qualification or course.

Signed:

*Rh Williams*

28.10.15

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## **Table of Contents**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Abbreviations and Clarifications   | VII       |
| List of Tables   | VIII      |
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1 Background   | 1         |
| 1.2 Aim  | 3         |
| 1.3 Rationale  | 4         |
| <b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| 2.1 Synthesis and Selection of Material  | 7         |
| 2.2 Language Development   | 8         |
| 2.3 The Welsh Language, Mother tongue and Bilingualism   | 10        |
| 2.4 Mother tongue and Non-mother tongue language in<br>Psychotherapy: Therapists' Perspectives | 12        |
| 2.4.1 The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related<br>Self-experience                            | 12        |
| 2.5 Language and the Therapeutic Relationship  | 14        |
| 2.5.1 Connection and Separation  | 15        |
| 2.5.2 Language Proficiency and Negative self-talk  | 17        |
| 2.5.3 Trust, Safety and Understanding  | 18        |
| 2.5.4 Flexibility and Choice   | 19        |
| <b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>  | <b>21</b> |
| 3.1 Research Design  | 21        |
| 3.2 Sample   | 22        |
| 3.3 Data Collection  | 24        |
| 3.4 Data Analysis  | 25        |
| 3.5 Framework for Understanding Validity   | 28        |
| 3.6 Ethics   | 29        |
| 3.7 Limitations  | 30        |

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Chapter 4: Findings</b>  | <b>32</b>     |
| 4.1 The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-experience    | 34            |
| 4.1.1 Professional Identity Development                           | 34            |
| 4.1.2 Familiarity and Language of Training                        | 35            |
| 4.1.3 Passage of Time   | 37            |
| 4.2 Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance | 38            |
| 4.2.1 Mother tongue and Pre-existing Understanding                | 38            |
| 4.2.2 Ease  | 40            |
| 4.2.3 Safety and Trust  | 41            |
| 4.3 Barrier to Counselling Relationship                           | 42            |
| 4.3.1 Impact of Language Proficiency                              | 42            |
| 4.3.2 More effort   | 43            |
| 4.4 Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist              | 45            |
| 4.4.1 Flexibility   | 45            |
| 4.4.2 Choice  | 46            |
| 4.5 Summary of Findings   | 47            |
| <br><b>Chapter 5: Discussion</b>                                  | <br><b>48</b> |
| 5.1 Introduction  | 48            |
| 5.2 The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience    | 48            |
| 5.3 Therapist Self-experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance | 51            |
| 5.4 Barrier to Counselling Relationship                           | 53            |
| 5.5 Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist              | 54            |
| 5.6 Summary   | 56            |
| <br><b>Chapter 6: Conculsion</b>                                  | <br><b>57</b> |
| 6.1 Introduction  | 57            |
| 6.2 Implications for Practice                                     | 58            |
| 6.3 Further Research  | 59            |
| <b>References</b>   | <b>61</b>     |
| <b>Appendices</b>   | <b>74</b>     |

## **Abbreviations and Clarifications**

IPA Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The terms novice and trainee; counsellor and therapist, mother tongue and first language, non-mother tongue and second language are used interchangeably throughout this research.

## **List of Tables**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table One - Overview of Super-ordinate Themes and Sub-themes | 34 |
|--|----|



## **Introduction: Chapter 1**

### **1.1 Background**

I was born in Ayrshire, Scotland to Welsh speaking parents and when I was 2 years old my family moved to a small Welsh village near Aberystwyth, a multi-cultural University town in West Wales. I was brought up in a predominantly Welsh speaking community as a child and as an adolescent with Welsh being the foremost language spoken at home, at school, and amongst family and friends. I attended a Welsh medium primary school with English becoming a statutory curriculum requirement at the age of seven. However, social and environmental interactions had already influenced my bilingual development by my third birthday and English was progressively becoming my second language. At secondary school I studied my GCSE and A level subjects through the medium of Welsh and throughout my Higher Education at Bangor University I studied both an undergraduate and masters degree through Welsh. Although I had a few close English speaking friends most of my friendships were with first language Welsh speakers with similar linguistic backgrounds.

My situation changed whilst working as a journalist for a weekly Welsh language news and current affairs magazine in South West Wales. I often interviewed people in English, so translating from English to Welsh for various articles became a daily routine. I recollect a lack of self-confidence and feelings of inadequacy when, during an interview, I sometimes forgot key words and thus scrambled to find the correct vocabulary. Although my current working environment is predominantly Welsh I am a member of a production team producing both Welsh and English language programmes for television channels such as S4C, BBC

Wales, Sky and BBC4. Also, I work bilingually as a newly practicing therapist working with both English and Welsh speaking clients.

I'm filled with a sense of pride when I consider my Welsh culture and heritage since it shapes an intrinsic aspect of my self. The way that I experience my identity is closely connected to the language that I speak and my ability to speak Welsh is greater than purely a mode of communication. I perceive it to be a key aspect of my makeup. My curiosity and interest in pursuing my chosen topic emerges from observations in both my clinical work and my personal life. As a fluent Welsh and English speaker I recognise that how I experience my self in both languages differ. Both of my linguistic selves are filtered through and associated with a different history, worldview and differing socio-cultural positioning. In Welsh I experience my self as being freer, looser, more creative and flexible whilst my English self feels more formal and restrained. Whilst working with clients I notice how I have sometimes felt awkward whilst faltering in my search for the appropriate vocabulary and how that process subsequently impacted me. The internal thought process has been a block to empathy as I have been in my own frame of reference rather than in the client's frame of reference. Yet, surprisingly, having less opportunities of working with clients through the medium of Welsh has resulted in a struggle to find a wide enough span of appropriate emotional terminology in everyday Welsh. Nevertheless, I experience a sense of being 'at home', of being more comfortable and of being able to relate instantly to a Welsh speaker that seems to be different when counselling an English speaker.

As I gain more experience as a counsellor, becoming more familiar with providing therapy in my second language, and further developing my counselling skills I am aware that I now feel more comfortable and confident in every aspect. Some

research suggests that the more experienced a therapist becomes the more comfortable and confident they become in their use of their second language in therapy (Sella, 2006). Trainee counsellors on the other hand are sometimes burdened by their lack of competency and proficiency (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1995). I recognise that how I experience my English self is ultimately changing since I've become more trusting of my own self. Also, I believe that the process of personal development, of continuous self reflection and reflexivity since undertaking the MA course in Clinical Counselling has allowed me to reflect upon how I conceptualise my bilingual self resulting in knowledge and awareness. By experiencing acceptance and understanding by others I have been urged to examine myself and, by displaying self-belief, the uncertainty in how I view my ability to provide therapy in my second language is changing.

The purpose of this research therefore is to increase both my understanding and the psychotherapy field of how bilingual counsellors experience working in two different languages and thus exploring the impact on the counselling relationship.

## **1.2 Aim**

The aim of this study is to investigate the experiences of bilingual (Welsh-English) counsellors providing therapy in their mother tongue (Welsh) and in their non-mother tongue language (English) and to explore the differences that may emerge and to examine how this may impact the therapeutic relationship.

The goal of my research is to inform therapeutic practice (Bright & Harrison, 2013) by introducing the viewpoints of Welsh first language counsellors who provide therapy in their mother tongue and in their non-mother tongue. The voices of practitioners will hopefully enrich our understanding in this particular subject and by

doing so will contribute to the current limited knowledge and understanding (Bright & Harrison, 2013) of this unrepresented field (Kennedy, 2013). The purpose of this study is to strengthen our understanding of how Welsh-speaking counsellors experience working in both languages and to contribute to the wider literature on mother tongue and non-mother tongue in counselling and providing insights for monolingual, bilingual and multilingual therapists alike (Rosenblum, 2011). Open discussions are required so that all practitioners are aware of the difficult language obstacles encountered by bilingual therapists (Iannaco, 2009) that will ultimately aid an appreciation of language issues in counselling (Rosenblum, 2011). Further knowledge will be useful to therapists working in both Welsh and in English and it is possible that information gained from this research will contribute to the wider literature on mother tongue and bilingualism in counselling which may supply beneficial insights in other bilingual settings.

In order to achieve my goal my key research question will be:

Do Welsh-speaking counsellors encounter differences in counselling in their mother tongue and in their second language and how may this impact the therapeutic relationship?

### **1.3 Rationale**

Bilingualism is viewed as a significant aspect of many people's lives and therefore it is vital that more information, knowledge and awareness are gained regarding its role in therapy (Bowker & Richards, 2004). An increase in the understanding about bilingualism will also aid other countries where bilingualism exists particularly with the flow of mass immigration (Costa & Dewaele, 2012) that occurs today and immigrants deciding to settle in unfamiliar countries such as the United Kingdom.

Therapists are now highly likely to have the opportunity of counselling clients where English is their second language. Yet bilingualism has been neglected in clinical practice according to Burck (2004) and further information is required regarding its role in therapy (Kennedy, 2013).

Historically the client has been the focus of attention in research whilst limited attention has been directed at exploring the therapist's needs (de Zulueta, 1990). No research exists that investigates first language Welsh counsellors' views of counselling in their mother tongue and in their non-mother tongue language and there is a lack of studies within the person-centred literature that examines the experiences of bilingual therapists (Kennedy, 2013). Some studies indicate that counsellors' bilingualism has important implications in the therapeutic alliance that may restrict therapists from sufficiently attending to their clients (Sprowls, 2002; Skulic, 2007).

This investigation intends to both review and contribute to the existing literature on the subject of therapists conducting therapy in their mother tongue and in their non-mother tongue language. The following chapter introduces past and current developments in research on language development, mother tongue, bilingualism and reviews relevant research on bilingual therapists' experiences of providing therapy in their first and second languages. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise appropriate developments in the field and to present a basis and a theoretical framework for the impending investigation. Chapter Three outlines the methodology which includes the research process, methods of data collection and analysis whilst Chapter Four presents the main themes emerging from the data. The Fifth Chapter will critically discuss the findings in relation to the current

literature and to conclude I will summarise the main findings and introduce future directions for research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Selection and Synthesis of Material**

There is a lack of studies that investigate therapists' experiences of working bilingually (Rosenblum, 2011) with no research available investigating first language Welsh counsellors' views of counselling in their mother tongue and in their non-mother tongue languages. Therefore this study is unique in its introduction of differences that may arise for Welsh first language therapists working bilingually. This literature review aims to deduce and shape the relevant material currently available on this topic and intends to consolidate a repository of information and understanding about the investigated field of study.

Bilingualism is a significant aspect of many people's lives and there are numerous studies investigating bilingual individuals from a neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspective (Bowker & Richards, 2004). However, my findings agree with Burck (2004) and Rosenblum (2011) that exploration concerning the role of language in counselling has been ignored in therapeutic settings. The studies on bilingual counselling in the United Kingdom during the last decade (Bowker & Richards, 2004; Costa, 2010; Costa & Dewaele, 2012; Stevens & Holland, 2008) are derived from heterogeneous therapeutic traditions, especially the psychodynamic orientation. Bilingual therapists' experiences included in person-centred literature are scarce (Kennedy, 2013) although research on bilingual clients receiving therapy in their mother tongue (Amati-Mehler, Argentieri & Canestri, 1990; Iannaco, 2009; Kennedy, 2013) and in their second language (Kokaliari & Catanzarite, 2011, Nguyen, 2014) is available. There are studies that specifically investigate the perceptions of Welsh speaking clients receiving therapy in both their first and second language (Kennedy, 2013, Roberts, 2013) but only a

few studies exist that investigate therapists' experiences (de Zulueta, 1990; Clauss, 1998; Rosenblum, 2011) and their perspectives of working bilingually and/or multilingually (Bamford, 1991; Pavlenko, 1996; Burck, 2004; Rosenblum, 2011).

I reviewed the core literature to determine relevant themes and to initiate a critical and investigative base for additional exploration. I have searched major electronic resources such as PsycINFO, PubMed and CINAHL (see Appendix 1, p.61). I have been committed to retaining a critical stance by exploring existing research on the topic and not to be excessively immersed in the available literature, ensuring space and scope to encourage the development of new ideas (McLeod, 1993).

The research included in this literature review contain material discussing;- language development and the historical background of the Welsh language; mother tongue and bilingualism; studies introducing bilingual therapists' experiences of providing therapy in their mother tongue and non-mother tongue languages and research investigating how language can impact the therapeutic relationship.

## **2.2 Language Development**

Language is fundamental to the psychological attachment between the mother and the child during the early stages of life (Dubinsky & Bazhenova, 1997). Significant findings by Tomatis (as cited in Maiello, 1997) demonstrate that the voice of the mother and its sound and rhythmic quality before birth itself becomes the very foundation for a child's eventual coded language system. The purpose of language is to manage relationships, provide a mode of constructing and to supply significance or purpose to our experiences, needs, emotions and ideas (Imberti,



2007; Costa, 2010). Language is a crucial tool for expressing and processing emotion and meaning (Iannaco, 2009; Tehrani & Vaughan, 2009) and encased in an individual's language is their cultural, racial, ethnic and historical experiences (Rosenblum, 2011).

There are numerous theories examining the importance of language in a person's development (Hoffmann, 1991; Stern, 1998; Bowker & Richards, 2004; Shanahan, 2008) and a considerable number emerge from the psychodynamic viewpoint (Bowker & Richards, 2004). Hoffmann's (1991) research on the linguistic and social features of bilingualism highlights language's ability to express powerfully an individual's separateness. Similarly, prominent psychoanalyst Stern (1998) hypothesises that language is an important means in achieving separation, individuation and creating a new way of relating to others. Bowker and Richards (2004) suggest that the infant steadily separates from his/her family circle, learning to use language to communicate with larger circles of people. Importantly, an individual's own identity can be deeply entrenched and determined in the person's ability to maintain his own language (Bowker & Richards, 2004).

Language influences development regardless of the differing theoretical perspectives (Kennedy, 2013). According to person-centred theory our environment can affect our development, as in the conditions of worth placed upon us (Merry, 2002). As language is a component of that environment it will therefore influence our development (Merry, 2002). The communication effectiveness of language is integral to healthcare provision (Roberts et al. 2004) since it creates the connection between the therapist and client which is essential to the development of a successful therapeutic alliance (Kokaliari, Catanzarite & Berzoff, 2013).

### **2.3 The Welsh Language, Mother tongue and Bilingualism**

The Welsh language is the oldest language in Britain and it is one of the earliest written languages in Europe (Davies, 1994). Welsh is descended from Proto-Celtic, a branch of the greater Indo-European language family which included nine separate languages (Davies, 1994). This version of Celtic evolved into Brittonic, the foundation of the Welsh language (Davies, 1994). Welsh was spoken widely across Britain during the sixth century, especially in Wales, Northern England and Southern Scotland (Davies, 1994).

According to the 2011 Census Key Statistics for Wales, 19.0% of people (aged 3 and over), approximately 562,000 of the 3.1 million population of Wales can speak the language (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Welsh is largely spoken in the Western regions of Wales in the counties of Gwynedd, Anglesey, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The population of Gwynedd in North Wales has seen a 3.6% decrease in the number of Welsh speakers between 2001 (77,846) and 2011 (77,000) but bilingual Welsh-English speakers shape the native majority where 65% of the population speak Welsh (Office for National Statistics, 2011).

An individual's mother tongue or first language has been described by Amati-Mehler et al. (1990) as the language by which the infant's speaking and thinking processes are initially learnt. However Rosenblum (2011) recognises that this definition is debatable as some children learn multiple languages simultaneously. Mother tongue has been described as the language of "emotional expressiveness" (Burck, 2004, p.320) and implies intimacy and closeness whilst the non-mother tongue or second language has been associated with emotional distance

(Dewaele, 2004; Sutton, Altarriba, Gianico & Basnight-Brown, 2007). The terms “mother tongue” and “first language” are used interchangeably in the literature (Kokaliari et al. 2013) and will likewise be interchanged throughout this study.

Bilingualism is a concept generally perceived as a person’s ability to express themselves in two different languages (Weinreich, 1953). Numerous individuals from infancy grow up speaking two or more languages simultaneously (Bowker & Richards, 2004). The ability to speak two languages, with equal or nearly equal fluency is defined as bilingualism (de Zulueta, 1990). Whilst Weinreich (1953) proposes to define bilingualism as the process of using two languages, alternately Presas (2000) argues that several key aspects are ignored, such as age and context of acquisition, the order of when the languages were acquired, the languages’ statuses and language proficiency. Equal competence in both languages is scarce according to Davies (2011) who suggests that linguistic proficiency may change as time progresses and as different situations arise. Alternatively, a study by Gathercole and Thomas (2009) of Welsh-English bilinguals propose that the same proficiency in English was achieved despite differences in their mother tongue and background. Kennedy (2013) argues that equal proficiency is not reached by those searching for the correct vocabulary to express emotion.

For the purpose of this study it is essential to consider that the Welsh language mainly exists in a bilingual setting (Kennedy, 2013; Roberts, 2013). Welsh is a minority language where status, power and the number of Welsh speakers is concerned despite it being the national language of Wales (Roberts et al. 1994). Both Welsh and English are taught in primary schools with the majority of infants

able to speak both languages by the time that they are four and a half years old (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009).

## **2.4 Mother tongue and Non-mother tongue language in Psychotherapy: Therapists' Perspectives**

### **2.4.1 The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-experience**

This section will discuss the literature on therapists' language related self-experiences when conducting therapy in their first and second languages. Although most of these studies originate in countries such as Spain and the United States, some of the research has informed my own thinking in terms of my own investigation.

In her reviews of current research literature into mental health assessment and treatment of bilingual clients in the United States, Bamford (1991) proposes that clients experience a dual sense of self, depending on the language they speak, a sentiment also echoed among bilingual therapists according to Rosenblum (2011) who examined the self-experiences of 12 bilingual/multilingual therapists conducting therapy with bilingual/multilingual clients. Rosenblum's (2011) qualitative study suggests that the way we sound and act coincides with our choice of language and therefore we interpret and understand our world through two different lenses. However, the study's findings relate to psychoanalytic and psychodynamic literature, rather than to person-centred writings.

Foster (1992; 1996) suggests that bilinguals have different language systems connecting each language to a different self. Pavlenko's (1996) investigation into therapists' self-perception whilst speaking in two languages recorded participants

as describing their first language as “real” (p.47) and “natural” (p.47) whereas the second language is seemingly less authentic and removed from a person’s sense of self. Burck (1997; 2004)’s concept that languages comprise of different world views lead her to propose the idea of “doubleness” (p.330) to demonstrate how bilinguals manage different world views which are sometimes in conflict with each other. More recently a qualitative study by Verdinelli and Biever (2009) of the experiences of 13 bilingual (Spanish-English) counsellors established various themes including therapists’ perceptions of living in two worlds and of self-reported differences within themselves when working in their second language such as difficulties in translation and using technical vocabulary. However Tehrani and Vaughan (2009) suggest that the language chosen determines how the individual experiences different aspects of him/her self. Their research adopted a case study approach and although it provides an in-depth investigation of the phenomena, the sample is extremely limited and therefore the data cannot be generalised.

A review by Connolly (2002) and Jimenez (2004) of the different psychoanalytical approaches suggest that bilingual clinicians who are familiar and comfortable with the meta-linguistic facets of their bilingualism appear to conduct successful therapy. Familiarity with the language used can develop a sense of ease in therapy and the qualitative study by Burck (2004) investigating participants’ experiences of living bilingual lives established that they felt more comfortable and authentic when speaking in their mother tongue rather than the formality and constraint experienced when using their second language. The mother tongue is often related to emotional expressiveness (Kennedy, 2013), a sense of belonging and described as the “language for intimacy and engendering closeness” (Burck, 2004, p. 320). Burck (2004) refers to an individual’s first language as possessing distinct

characteristics, regarded as the language of creativity, humour and an unconscious mode of communication free from difficulty or effort. This study highlights how speaking a different language can have a different effect and meaning for a person and their relationships, an aspect which is of particular relevance to my own investigation. Contrarily an individual's second language is suggested as creating emotional distance according to Dewaele (2004) and Sutton et al. (2007). Additionally Bowker and Richards (2004) suggest that the therapists in their study were less confident in their ability to empathise with their clients when the language was less familiar, therefore they tended to be less attentive (Verdinelli, 2006).

Conducting therapy in the second language can lead the therapist to question their proficiency in providing therapy according to a qualitative phenomenological study by Sprowls (2002) of nine bilingual therapists (Spanish-English). However, a notable psychoanalytical study by Sella (2006) of bilingual immigrant psychotherapists' experiences of counselling children in their second language noticed, as time progressed, a greater confidence linguistically as well as an improvement in the therapeutic alliance. Verdinelli (2006)'s qualitative study of Spanish-English therapists demonstrates that the participants felt self-conscious, isolated and disconnected as a result of the linguistic barrier with confusion arising regarding communication and misunderstanding between therapist and clients. The therapists in Sprowls' (2002) study indicate that a lack of self-confidence results from translation and its time consuming difficulties.

## **2.5 Language and The Therapeutic Relationship**

Creating a successful counselling dyad is crucially dependent on language (Kokaliari et al. 2013). Whilst counsellors' bilingualism can sometimes negatively impact the counselling relationship by inhibiting therapists from adequately paying attention to their clients (Sprowls, 2002), other studies suggest that a bilingual therapist can enhance and benefit the therapy provided (Skulic, 2007). Only a limited body of knowledge exists which investigates therapists' bilingualism and its impact on the therapeutic relationship from a clinician point of view.

### **2.5.1 Connection and Separation**

Language can create either closeness or distance within the counselling relationship (Bowker & Richards, 2004). In a study by Bowker and Richards (2004) of psychotherapists' experiences of working in English with bilingual clients who spoke English proficiently as a second language, the clinicians noticed counter-transference experiences of separation and distancing in variable degrees from their clients. A commitment to be more attentive and attuned to all verbal and non-verbal communication was expressed by the therapists to ensure a closer connection (Bowker & Richards, 2004). Likewise Jimenez (2004) proposes that dependence on non-verbal communication which is the sharing of emotional states, described as affective attunement of the deeper pre-verbal processes, is especially crucial for therapists working in their second language as it secures the therapeutic alliance (Skulic, 2007). Similarly, Sella (2006) recognises the therapists' presence as the mode of empathy and describes their position of "just being" (p.26) whilst Winnicott (as cited in Jacobs, 1995) refers to the therapist as an entity who provides empathic holding. Skulic (2007) suggests that such research has important significance for clinical practice as, regardless of lack of language proficiency, a therapeutic alliance can be created successfully by

communicating non-verbally in an environment where the client is empathically held and supported.

The argument that the counselling pair should ideally be matched according to language is suggested by Marcos and Alpert (1976) and later by de Zulueta (1990) and thus removes any disputes regarding language competence or obstacles. Antinucci (2004) opposes this viewpoint, referring to clinical material from two cases demonstrating that a linguistic and cultural match could lead the client to discontinue therapy prematurely caused by the therapist's overwhelming familiarity. However, an ethnically and culturally matched therapist and client created a connection and a togetherness leading to greater positive outcomes in Verdinelli and Biever (2009)'s study with participants maintaining that familiarity resulted in feeling more at ease and using more humour. Another participant expressed that sharing a similar background lead them to a better understanding of the client and vice versa (Verdinelli & Biever, 2009). Likewise, in a small-scale study by Costa (2010), mutual bilingualism had a positive impact on the therapy due to the therapists' identification with their clients. Costa and Dewaele (2012) investigated the experiences of 101 monolingual and multilingual therapists working with multilingual clients and found that the therapists felt more attuned with their clients and more able to assist them to experience greater connection and less isolation.

However, Nguyen's (2014) qualitative study of the experiences of bilingual therapists with their monolingual and bilingual clients introduces the concept of over-identification when the therapist and client share the same language and culture. Challenges and difficulties for both members of the counselling couple can arise, possibly hindering the therapy (Nguyen, 2014). The therapist and client



could collude and an exploration of differences could be ignored (Nguyen, 2014). The therapists in Nguyen's (2014) study appeared to experience an immediate bond or intimacy when working with mutual bilingual clients. This study may provide useful ideas for my own investigation, however, since the main themes, namely identification and over-identification are defined as mental processes in psychodynamic theory they are dissimilar to person-centred theory and its philosophical underpinnings.

Studies suggest that therapists experience greater intimacy and instantaneous feelings of closeness and kinship when speaking the same language as the client during therapy (Rosenblum, 2011). These feelings of togetherness is endorsed in a study by Sprowls (2002) and Biever et al. (2004) where practitioners describe an 'us versus them' mentality likeness. Bilingual (Spanish-English) therapists in Verdinelli and Biever's (2009) study revealed that whilst sharing the same ethnic background as their clients had a positive effect on the therapeutic alliance, they felt formal and detached when counselling English speaking clients. Roberts (2013) recent findings of Welsh first language clients receiving art therapy in English suggests that if they had been counselled in their first language then sharing similar distinguishing attributes could have eased engagement and the advancement of a therapeutic alliance. However, due to this study's limitation of a small sample of two participants, it could arguably be too small to draw any firm conclusions.

### **2.5.2 Language Proficiency and Negative Self-talk**

According to Jimenez (2004) the therapists' abilities to withstand their feelings of incompetence when speaking in the client's language can have a positive affect on

the therapeutic relationship and on the therapy in general. However, the therapeutic relationship can be jeopardised if the therapist becomes hyper-vigilant and absorbed by negative self-talk regarding their linguistic competence, detracting from their ability to respond adequately to their clients (Verdinelli, 2006). Clinicians who are preoccupied with thoughts and feelings that revolve around their own language related self-experience seem less able to respond empathically to a client (Skulic, 2007). Successful therapy in a second language is possible if the therapist is continuously self-reflecting on personal issues and experiences associated with providing therapy in their second language (Antinucci, 2004; Verdinelli, 2006; Skulic, 2007). Ultimately, the study by Skulic (2007) identifies that if clinicians are able to adjust to every culture by being aware of clients' cultural backgrounds and consequently succeed to manage their cultural identities, then it benefited their cross-cultural work.

### **2.5.3 Trust, Safety and Understanding**

Language can create safety within the counselling relationship and aid the development of trust (Teyber & McClure, 2000). In a recent explorative small-scale qualitative study by Kennedy (2013) which investigates the role of mother tongue in counselling Welsh speaking clients, one of the four research participants description of feeling safe is associated with a sense of familiarity and comfort. Another describes how language is used as a device governing how safe she feels when speaking about different issues (Kennedy, 2013). Moreover, the participants who described Welsh as their first language mentioned that receiving counselling by a Welsh therapist felt safer (Kennedy, 2013). Although this study supports the importance of counsellor awareness of the potential ramifications of mother tongue

in the counselling relationship for Welsh speakers, it considers the impact from a client rather than a counsellor perspective.

If the client experiences feeling understood by their therapist it can have a positive influence on the therapy according to Skulic (2007). Therefore a therapist's lack of linguistic proficiency can lead to misunderstanding of the client's communication and an adverse affect on the formation of a counselling relationship (Skulic, 2007). Even when an effective relationship has been forged the client may oppose the therapist's linguistic incompetence by concentrating on presenting difficulties which can obstruct the process (Skulic, 2007). Nevertheless, regardless of therapists' lack of linguistic proficiency, research findings demonstrate that positive outcomes are possible if therapists attend to their own feelings around lack of competence in the client's language and find a means of effectively communicating with their client (Skulic, 2007).

#### **2.5.4 Flexibility and Choice**

There are facilitative uses to being a bilingual therapist (Burck, 2004; Verdinelli, 2006; Skulic, 2007; Santiago-Rivera, Altarriba, Poll, Gonzalez-Miller & Cragun, 2009; Kennedy, 2013, Roberts, 2013). Bilingualism benefits the process of psychotherapy (Skulic, 2007) with bilingual therapists reporting greater flexibility in their use of different languages in therapy compared to monolingual therapists (Burck, 2004). Bilinguals possess distinct characteristics such as language switching, which is a therapeutic tool for connecting with the client's language (Marcos & Alpert, 1976) and strengthening the relationship between therapist and client (Santiago-Rivera et al. 2009) aiding the counselling process (Verdinelli, 2006). Furthermore Alessi (2000) proposes that bilingual therapists display

flexibility as they are more responsive to cultural differences because of their own experiences of being bilingual.

Providing clients with a choice of language in counselling is commonly viewed as a beneficial aspect in the existing literature (Foster, 1996; Madoc-Jones, 2004; Kennedy, 2013; Roberts, 2013). In a study investigating the availability of mental health services in the Welsh language, Madoc-Jones (2004) suggests that providing services in the client's preferred language is crucial. He argues that linguistic oppression as a result of limited availability of Welsh language services coupled with problems of communicating in the second language can have a detrimental impact (Madoc-Jones, 2004). Linguistically sensitive services in Wales are essential to ensure effective provision and equality of access (Madoc-Jones, 2004), a notion supported by Misell (2000) who argues that language choice should be viewed as the basis for the provision of culturally and linguistically responsive services. Furthermore Foster (1996) supports the belief that therapists should follow the client's lead in language choice.

## **Chapter 3 – Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

Quantitative and qualitative approaches have differing philosophical underpinnings (Flick, 2011) and the quantitative-qualitative debate in science, psychology and social care is long-established (Coolican, 2014). Qualitative research methods are based on phenomenology and are a mode of inquiry which aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour (Bright & Harrison, 2013). The quantitative approach on the other hand is viewed as a conventional scientific paradigm (Willig, 2008) based on a positivist and reductionist view of the world (Davies, 2007). Current quantitative approaches emphasise that observing and measuring the investigated phenomena can reveal more of the world's truths, and is specifically interested in eliminating bias and sampling error (Coolican, 2014). In contrast, qualitative research is nested in epistemology offering a holistic method rather than a means of reducing emotional processes to simple elements (McLeod, 2015). An inductive approach is encouraged rather than a hypothetico-deductive method which is described as a scientific inquiry beginning with formulation of a hypothesis that either supports, confirms or challenges it (Coolican, 2014).

This research study adopted a qualitative approach fulfilling the focus and philosophical basis of my study of gaining insight into the participants' lived experience and how they make sense of their world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) rather than measuring or quantifying their experiences (Davies, 2007). Descriptive qualitative studies attempt to investigate a particular area or to document and evaluate the experiences of a specific group (Coolican, 2014), in my case, first language Welsh speaking bilingual counsellors. Qualitative approaches have been viewed as beneficial when initiating a new area of research determining salient

issues (Fitzpatrick & Boulton, 1994). There are insufficient studies which investigate the experiences of bilingual (Welsh-English) clinicians working in their mother tongue and in their non-mother tongue. Qualitative research methods support the exploration of this inadequately represented subject by permitting an investigation which enables a more in-depth and flexible examination (Rosenblum, 2011) and securing a collection of rich and meaningful data (McLeod, 2003). As this study seeks to understand a specific phenomenon in a specific context, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has been utilised which is an idiographic method and particular approach to qualitative inquiry (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

### **3.2 Sample**

IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes (Smith et al. 2009) and for this research participants were selected by using purposive (non-probability) sampling which can present an understanding into a specific phenomenon (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) and accessing individuals with specific relevance to the topic under investigation (Denscombe, 2010). This sampling method investigates similarities and differences within the data and the sample size allows for a comprehensive inquiry of each participant (Smith et al. 2009) rather than recruiting a large sample representative of the whole population (Davies, 2007). This number meets the IPA recommendation of between three and six for a Masters study allowing the researcher the opportunity to analyse each individual in detail as well as analysing across the data (Smith et al. 2009).

Selection criteria included both experienced and trainee bilingual counsellors who:-  
were person-centred in orientation; considered Welsh as their first language;

provided therapy in Welsh and English; had current or recent experience of working in Welsh and English for at least 12 months; had access to supervision and were members of BACP or equivalent professional organisation. Trainee counsellors were included since they are sometimes strained by their lack of competency and proficiency (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1995) whilst the more experienced therapist becomes more comfortable and confident counselling in their second language with the passage of time (Sella, 2006). Therefore the variability of the sample's level of counselling experience allowed for variation and additional insight (Patton, 2002). As there are limited studies on bilingualism within the person-centred literature (Rosenblum, 2011) Welsh speaking counsellors who were person-centred in orientation were recruited to ensure their relevance to the theoretical aspects of the study.

Participants were recruited by contacting organisations, such as Relate Cymru, who offer counselling in Welsh throughout Wales, and by bilingual poster advertisements (Appendix 2, p.62). Trainees were targeted by contacting counselling course leaders at North and West Wales Universities and Colleges which were in predominantly Welsh-speaking areas. All institutions were sent a cover letter with information about the study asking for permission to advertise (Appendix 3, pp.63-64 & Appendix 4, pp.64-68). The diverse geographic locations in selecting the participants provided a range of diverse participant populations and organisation settings (Rosenblum, 2011). In order to identify further participants a secondary snowballing method was also adopted so that I could pinpoint the sample more effectively (Denscombe, 2010).

Interested participants were sent an information sheet and a brief questionnaire so that they were fully informed and that they fulfilled the selection criteria (Appendix

4, pp.64-68 & Appendix 5, p.69). As I was recruiting bilingual participants all documents were bilingual (in Welsh and English) ensuring that I was adhering to the Welsh Language Act (1993) which encourages individuals' right to choose between English or Welsh written materials. Participants were allowed to discuss any issues before deciding to participate in the research. Nine participants responded to the advert and six of them satisfied the inclusion criteria. I recruited on the basis of those offering the most variability to my sample, for example, I recruited 4 counsellors and 1 trainee counsellor, 4 being females and 1 male with participants living in North and West Wales from a variety of agency settings.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

A pilot study was conducted prior to interviewing the participants to assess the suitability and adequacy of the method of inquiry and to identify difficulties that may arise (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). This determined the length of the interview, the clarity of the questions and the likelihood of evoking emotional responses (McLeod, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data with questions being open-ended and non-directive complying with the IPA method (Willig 2008). This type of interviewing enables the participant to communicate matters of personal importance (Britten, 1995) and allows the researcher to use an interview schedule developed in accordance with Spong (2011) and Smith et al.(2009) (Appendix 6, pp.70-71) which was subject based allowing for flexibility during the interviewing process (Barbour, 2014). Koenig, Back and Crawley (2003) suggest that the flexible aspect of semi-structured interviews reduces the likelihood of causing a negative impact on participants. Smith et al. (2009) support semi-structured



interviews for their ability to facilitate empathy and understanding which provides better flexibility of coverage and enables the researchers to access new and original fields, a crucial aspect of this research study.

The participants attended 45-60 minute interviews at mutually convenient locations, with safety and confidentiality requirements paramount. The interviews were conducted in English because of the lack of Welsh speaking examiners at Chester University (see 'Limitations', p.30 for more information). Participants were informed of the situation prior to the interview and all were satisfied to continue. Instant termination of interview prior to the recording of the session, without explanation or fear of reprisal, was made clear to the interviewee in accordance with process consent outlined by Elliot and Williams (2001). The 5 interviews were documented using verbatim transcription and were then sent to each participant to check for accuracy. Participant anonymity was maintained throughout.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The purpose of analysing data is to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon being investigated and there are many different types of analysis that can describe, explain or interpret the material (Denscombe, 2014). The aim of qualitative research is to explore individuals' views and to gain a deep understanding of their own feelings and experiences (Davies, 2007) based on phenomenology (Denscombe, 2014).

The data of this study was analysed by the IPA methodology since it is consistent with the phenomenological approach (Smith et al. 2009) whereby individuals' experiences and their own view of the world is considered (Larkin, Watts, and Cliffdon, 2006). The IPA approach is heavily affected by the hermeneutic form of

phenomenology which is a theory of interpretation (Smith et al. 2009). Furthermore, IPA is described as involving a double hermeneutic (Smith & Osborn, 2003) where the researcher attempts to make sense of the interviewee who is also making sense of his/her experience (Smith et al. 2009). I have attempted to ensure that the interviewee's voices have not become lost in the process of analysis by 'bracketing off' my own assumptions and striving towards reflexivity (Willig, 2008). This encourages me as a researcher to identify and challenge my own values and beliefs by being mindful of those of my participants (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Bager-Charleson, 2010; Finlay, 2013). Bracketing off or epoche helps me as a researcher to suspend judgement, to set aside my own views and to examine the phenomenon from an open perspective (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). However Turp (2002) claims that the legitimacy of bracketing off assumptions in order to prevent bias is disputed by post-modern writing as being questionably impossible.

A characteristic of qualitative research is its inductive method of analysing the data (Barbour, 2014) unlike a deductive approach adopted by quantitative research (Morse, 1991). The qualitative approach recognises the researcher's self as an integral aspect of the process (Etherington, 2004). As the qualitative paradigm is commonly associated with interpretivism, the emphasis is generally placed on the role of the researcher in the process of analysing the material (Denscombe, 2014). Qualitative research acknowledges the researcher's unavoidable role in constructing the data and recognises the significance of the interviewer's own history and beliefs within the data collection and analysis (Denscombe, 2014).

The qualitative researcher is required to deconstruct and reconstitute the material into a meaningful form (Barbour, 2014). McLeod (2003) suggests a process whereby the researcher immerses herself in the data by analysing each

participant's material in detail. Contrary to other methods (McLeod, 2003), IPA analysis begins by exploring each participant individually before integrating the data at a later stage (Dallos & Vetere, 2005). This method provides a rich and comprehensive description of counsellors' experiences (Smith et al. 2009) of working in Welsh and in English and allows for flexibility by permitting new and unanticipated categories of meaning to arise (Willig, 2008).

Analysis of the data was guided by the Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) approach whereby I immersed myself in the data by listening to the audio recordings and reading the transcripts. I wrote initial notes (Appendix 7, p.72) and then listed the transcript into specific columns before using a coding system to classify the analysis into descriptive, linguistic or conceptual comments (Appendix 8, pp.73-75). I later added my own initial thoughts as a reflective ongoing process. The next step was to create an abstraction of emergent themes in the left column which reflected some of the participants' meanings. I then created a mini analysis for each participant of the emerging themes (Appendix 9, pp.76-77; Appendix 10, p.78; Appendix 11, p.79) and used the process of subsumption of the data in order to cluster themes which are related and that I deemed important (Appendix 12, pp.80-83). Once the themes for each individual were chosen I selected super-ordinate themes by searching for common themes between all participants (Appendix 13, p.84). In an attempt to create a balance between critical thinking and staying close to the participant's world I created an audit trail of supporting quotes from each participant as evidence of each theme (Appendix 14, pp.85-90). I then formulated a table of key themes with page/line numbers for each participant to effectively connect with the data (Appendix 15, pp.91-94). Creating an evidence trail and linking back to the data enhances trustworthiness (McLeod, 1999) by

fixing the participants' meanings in their context and to briefly re-suspend my own critical judgement (Spinelli, 2005). A table of master themes emerged (Appendix 16, p.95) whilst searching for commonality and being attentive to the prospect of new themes arising and creating differences (Biggerstaff & Thompson 2005).

### **3.5 Framework for Understanding Validity**

McLeod (2001) suggests that the validity of a study is dependent on a clear and comprehensive explanation of the research process, specification of methods and an adequate contextualisation and conceptualisation of the data. I feel confident that my skills, sensitivity and integrity as a researcher have contributed to achieving a reliable study (Patton, 1990).

I recognise the qualitative researcher's paradoxical stance as I am required to work both transparently, to tune into interviewee's meanings, as well as to be mindful that my own beliefs do not impact the investigation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). I am aware that the search for meaning is filtered through my own historical and cultural context of language which could misrepresent the participants experiences (McLeod 2003). Accurate data was ensured by my development of an accurate and comprehensive audit trail as well as member checking (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2004). Likewise my research is ground in the subject's literature and contributing to the existing body of knowledge (Bright & Harrison, 2013). In order to evaluate the validity of this study I have adhered to the guidelines outlined by Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999) which support the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach (Willig, 2008).

The reliability of this study is measured in terms of whether the research instrument can generate the same results if administered by different researchers

(Denscombe, 2014). Although Denscombe (2014) suggests that certainty is impossible, Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that dependability within the qualitative paradigm may address this issue. Researchers need to be able to demonstrate that their study shows processes and decisions that other researchers are able to see thus demonstrating whether the research can be replicated (Denscombe, 2014). Reliability is measured in terms of an explicit record of the research methods, analysis and process of making decisions (Denscombe, 2014). Another measurement is the provision of a reflexive report of the procedures to demonstrate and support how the researcher reached her conclusions (Seale, 1999). I have displayed this through the use of a good audit trail (see Appendices pp.85-94).

Consideration has been given to trustworthiness throughout the researching process by concisely expressing each participant's findings after listening to recordings and reading transcriptions of interviews. The research also applied the triangulation method which is the bringing together of contrasting sources of information in order to improve the study's trustworthiness (Patton, 2002). The aim of triangulation is to allow for possible better understanding of the investigated phenomena by examining it from various stances and ensuring a greater accuracy and a more comprehensive account (Denscombe, 2010).

### **3.6 Ethics**

Ethical practice in research is a dynamic procedure requiring constant monitoring according to Barbour (2014). I have conducted my research ethically believing that the participants' wellbeing was crucial and that the investigation doesn't cause any harm (Denscombe, 2014). I have adhered to the British Association for Counselling

and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (2010) and the study has been approved by the Chester University Research Ethics Committee in order to safeguard the participants. I have also worked according to ethical considerations discussed by Bond (2010) and Willig (2008). I have followed ethical practice in research (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) by ensuring that participants had necessary support through access to supervision. Furthermore, counsellors' details were available to any distressed participants. I have gained informed consent (Appendix 17, p.96) to gather and analyse the data as well as ensuring each participant's anonymity by using pseudonyms and discarding information that could identify the participants from the transcripts and offering them the right to withdraw at any point (Smith et al. 2009). I have also asked each participant to check transcripts so that their experiences are correctly represented (Barbour, 2014).

### **3.7 Limitations**

Limitations that could be considered are:- the small sample size could hinder generalisation (Willig, 2008); misrepresentation of the experiences of all bilingual first language Welsh-speaking therapists due to a fairly homogenous group and participants having selected themselves could be due to their own biases.

Uncertainty arose regarding one particular interviewee who worried about the possible repercussions work-wise of being too open and honest. This could have influenced the nature of the data that emerged (Denscombe, 2014) even though the participant said that she was honest in her interview. When research involves topics which explore participants' feelings and experiences it is a challenge to know with any certainty that they are reporting honestly according to Denscombe

(2014). However there are ways of verifying the participant's material by checking it with other sources of information on the subject (Denscombe, 2014).

The IPA approach itself with its reliance on language to decipher the basis of a phenomenon is a restricting factor with language having its own subjective understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Language is at the core of this study and the prime focus of research. It captures personal experiences and discloses valuable information, essential for collecting data (Willig, 2008). The argument that language constructs reality instead of describing it questions whether IPA and phenomenological research lacks sufficient engagement with its constitutive duty (Willig, 2008).

I ensured that all participant information was comprehensive and bilingual. However, I conducted all the interviews in English, a possible limitation for Welsh first language participants. The translation process itself could alter the data and there was a higher possibility of creating a 'lost in translation' scenario as direct translations are not always possible (Sutton et al. 2007; Iannaco, 2009). Some participants (particularly Efa) mentioned feeling less comfortable and confident speaking in her second language. If the interviews were conducted in Welsh it is possible that the nature of the data could be different. However, participants such as Lowri would not have accessed some of her feelings around her bilingual self if the interviews were not conducted in English, an aspect which is apparent in research by Bowker and Richards (2004) and Kokaliari et al. (2013). Costa (2010) claims that interviewing in the client's second language can still produce significant and purposeful knowledge.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the rich data generated by the 5 participants. The material has produced 4 super-ordinate themes and 10 sub-themes that guided the discussion (see Table 1 below). These themes were consistently the most prominent and appeared to be the most universal amongst all participants therefore uniformly representing their voices (Smith, 2008). The data has been interpreted and supported by using textual quotes from the participants as directed by Smith et al. (2009) who emphasise the importance of including evidence from each participant for each theme. Careful consideration has been taken to accurately capture the essence of each individual's meaning of the investigated phenomena and attention has also been given to explain and highlight the convergence and divergence of each person's world (Denscombe, 2014).

The first participant, Delyth, is a 38 year old counsellor living in North-West Wales. She has been providing therapy to Welsh and English speaking adolescents for 4 years.

Lowri is a 50 year old counsellor from North Wales. She learned English at an early age and has been working bilingually for 7 years.

Efa is a 37 year old trainee counsellor on her final year of training living and working in North Wales. The majority of her clinical work is through the medium of English.

Gwion, a 63 year old counsellor from West Wales has been providing therapy for 15 years. He considers himself as both bilingual and trilingual and speaks fluent Welsh, English and German.



Nia is a 56 year old counsellor working in North Wales. She has been counselling for 25 years and describes a fluctuating use of her mother tongue.

For further biographical details of participants see Appendix 18, pp.97-98.

Table 1. Overview of Super-ordinate Themes and Sub-themes

| Super-ordinate themes  | Sub-themes  |
|--|---|
| 1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience    | a. Professional Identity Development<br>b. Familiarity and Language of Training<br>c. Passage of Time |
| 2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance | a. Mother tongue and Pre-existing Understanding<br>b. Ease<br>c. Safety and Trust                     |
| 3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship                           | a. Impact of Language Proficiency<br>b. More Effort   |
| 4. Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist              | a. Flexibility<br>b. Choice   |

#### **4.1 The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience**

##### **4.1.1 Professional Identity Development**

All participants discuss language in terms of a connection with their identity and/or their sense of self whilst 4 of the 5 participants mention a different and dual sense of self depending on the language that they speak. Delyth describes a different sense of self that “*are maybe different parts of myself*” (27/289) which are apparent when she is speaking in either language:

*In Welsh I am more expressive, friendly, chatty, talk faster than in English when I'm a bit less expressive and probably a bit more professional. (27/290)*

Lowri recognises changes in her sense of self when she is speaking in either language in terms of how she feels age-wise and notices that each language is connected to its period of acquisition:

*I'm a younger therapist when I'm speaking Welsh because it's the language I spoke when I was a baby and a toddler and I'm probably an older self in English as it's more connected with secondary school, work and training. (15/163)*

Efa also experiences a different sense of self in each language. Her first language engenders a sense of authenticity and alternatively she is unable to be her true self when speaking in English as a result of the effort required:

*It's a different sense I think because it doesn't feel as comfortable and I'm not truly being myself maybe because I have to think more. I'm me in Welsh, I can talk like I want to, it flows freely and I'm more comfortable. (14/147)*

Nia recognises a noticeable difference in her sense of self in her mother tongue which seems to be less distinct as she matures although still apparent:

*In my younger, less experienced self I could see myself feeling more caught up in fear of judgement and holding a role that dropped away when I could speak my mother tongue. By now I'm not convinced that that's quite so strong. (19/201)*

Gwion defines himself according to the languages that he speaks and explains that he has an equal sense of self in both Welsh and English as a result of being “truly bilingual” (23/249):

*Being truly bilingual as in dreaming in both languages I think I'm being myself in both languages because I dream in either so I think I'm being honest and transparent as me in either. (23/249)*

#### **4.1.2 Familiarity and Language of Training**

Each participant trained to be a counsellor through the medium of English and the familiarity of the language of training such as the technical vocabulary impacts how they conceptualise their ability and comfort levels within their practice in their second language. Delyth discusses the importance of the familiarity of her language of training in terms of how comfortable she feels counselling in that language:

*I'm really familiar with talking about feelings in English. It's what I'm used to. It's the language I first started counselling in and I never felt uncomfortable counselling in it. (38/371)*

Lowri prefers counselling in her language of training and therefore she is more familiar with counselling terms and theories in the English language:

*When I'm counselling adults I prefer it in English because it was the language I was taught to counsel in and therefore I can put my theories into practice. (21/224)*

As Gwion trained in English it is a familiar language in terms of his practice whereas the unavailability of Welsh counselling terms have been a source of difficulty when providing therapy in Welsh:

*Because the training was putting you in English, English, English and therefore to do it in Welsh instinctively wasn't available. (24/257)*

Similar to the other participants, English is Nia's professional language which results in familiarity and an increased mastery in her second language which increases her confidence in her technical linguistic ability:

*My education and training had been in English and I feel more confident in my grammar in English. (13/129)*

Although English is a familiar language in terms of Efa's counselling training and majority of her work, in contrast to the other participants she experiences an internal process of translating from Welsh-English which affects her work in English. Subsequently, her familiarity with a language is associated with how comfortable she feels speaking it:

*When you speak English you kind of try and translate everything so it takes more time to kind of get the words out and that's where I struggle sometimes. Because Welsh is my first language I'm much more comfortable talking and working in Welsh. (4/52)*

#### **4.1.3 Passage of Time**

The participants mention changes in how they view counselling in a language which has previously been a source of difficulty and how they have become more experienced with the progress of time. Lowri notices differences in how she perceives counselling in her second language since gaining more experience resulting in an increase in ease and confidence:

*It's also practice. I've been counselling for many years so it's become more natural, it's become less of an issue, it's become more comfortable and I'm probably a lot more confident. (10/94)*

Likewise Efa recognises changes in her perception of working in English as she becomes more skilled and observes how her counselling ability is linked to her self-confidence:

*The more I do it the more I learn and the easier it gets and you do get more confident and your skills develop over time. (16/172)*

Delyth has become more comfortable and confident in her use of her second language over the years due to a change in circumstances, such as moving away and marrying an English speaker:

*As time has passed and now that I've spent a lot of time away in England and married to an English speaking person I'm very comfortable talking in English now. It's what I'm used to. (9/95)*

The number of years working as a counsellor and the subsequent experiences gained has increased Nia's confidence in her counselling ability. Furthermore, her maturation seems to play a part in how she has developed, regardless of language:

*Perhaps when I first started it was more of an issue when I was less confident. (16/154) By now I think I'm getting more and more congruent, less caught up in how I appear, and more just well this is how I am and just the volume of years of working with people. (17/174)*

Due to practice and familiarity Gwion notices how over the years he has become more at ease counselling in his mother tongue:

*In the beginning it was surprising to me how difficult it was but now it's just familiarity, sheer practice, simple as. I've kicked into that area where I'm comfortable. (24/256)*

## **4. 2 Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance**

### **4.2.1 Mother tongue and Pre-existing Understanding**

The participants discuss their experiences of counselling clients in their mother tongue in terms of a pre-existing understanding; a shared consideration of each other creating a connection within the counselling relationship.

Lowri recognises a shared pre-existing unspoken knowledge and cultural understanding which exists when she is counselling Welsh clients and which results in forging a therapeutic connection:

*There are things that we will not have to explain, the cultural connotations will be understood without words and it feels a bit like an elastic band between us and that we can connect. (5/63)*

A similar phenomenon is described by Delyth as she identifies a shared understanding that is present which is connected to a familiarity of each other's cultural backgrounds:

*There is this kind of joint understanding, maybe we have some understanding of cultural backgrounds or maybe there's that aspect of the familiarity of it, knowing what it means to speak the language. (19/203)*

Efa notices the sense of understanding that is created when counselling in Welsh and by sharing similarities it can aid the bond between her and her clients:

*We've got our own phrases, our own language and because you're from the same area, you use the same lingo. The client probably thinks 'oh yeah she's from here, she talks like I do', it might kind of make you feel a bit closer to that person. (11/114)*

Gwion recognises a shared historical understanding resulting in a sense of innate relatedness:

*There is a Celtic, Gaelic, Brittonic melancholy that's available and if the client has it I have it. It's almost history, it's almost two thousand years of something. (32/337)*

For Nia working in her mother tongue can sometimes feel ancestral and familial and the shared unity and understanding seems to aid the formation of trust:

*It is almost tribal, it's like with your family or something like that. There's a familiarity or an informality that can happen. I think it's something to do with that really, that there's a sense of mutual trust. (8/74)*

#### **4.2.2 Ease**

All participants refer to a sense of ease when counselling clients who share the same mother tongue as them which seem to suggest an unselfconscious positioning which can contribute to a feeling of comfort. Delyth notices that her way of being is different when she is counselling Welsh clients and experiences a physical response by dropping her shoulders as a sign of relaxation:

*I keep wanting to go lower, keep wanting to drop my shoulders when I'm thinking about being with Welsh clients, so maybe I am a bit more relaxed. (24/233)*

Lowri describes counselling Welsh clients in terms of elasticity and ease which seems to be effortless:

*Because this elastic band kind of feel is natural when it happens through Welsh. (7/66)*

There is a smooth and organic essence to Efa's practice when she is counselling in Welsh which occurs without effort:

*I think it's more natural, I feel more comfortable. I think it flows more natural I think than in English. (4/44)*

Nia experiences a sense of ease that can sometimes happen more rapidly in her mother tongue:

*It can feel more at ease more quickly, I think it's not so much that it doesn't happen in either language I think it's that sometimes it seems to click in a lot more quickly when you're straight into your mother tongue. (8/92)*



Gwion recognises that the ease that he now experiences when communicating in his mother tongue has changed over the years. It is now viewed as an impulsive, authentic and natural process:

*That I would say is something instinctive, you blurt out something, that's the moment, that's the test and if you have it and you don't have to think about it. That's something that I didn't have in the beginning and over time has come in the Welsh language. (23/241)*

#### **4.2.3 Safety and Trust**

The use of mother tongue in counselling can facilitate or/and accelerate the development of trust and safety within the therapeutic relationship according to the participants. Delyth mentions how communicating in her mother tongue, which she describes as a specific rhythm of speaking, can be used as a message of safety which is closely linked to familiarity and comfort:

*It's more about the rhythm of speaking and it feeling safe, comfortable, familiar and comforting. I know this rhythm, I've felt it before, it comes from a safe place, this is okay. (22/233)*

For Lowri the connection and shared understanding that exists when counselling a Welsh speaking client can forge a sense of safety:

*It feels, I suppose it feels comfortable, safe and it feels warm because there's that unspoken understanding. (17/174)*

Gwion recognises that sharing similar facets, of being Welsh and of being a minority culture and language, may allow a sense of trust to emerge within the relationship:

*I think there's an element of trust that comes in a bit more because we're smaller in number, we're a smaller group and I think that, 'oh we've got a Cymraeg here'. (22/232)*

Nia identifies the significant moments when relating to one another in the mother tongue that promotes trust and how the familiarity of the first language can accelerate its formation:

*There is something about relating to one and other in our first language that allows a sense of trust to come in, or some kind of dropping of defences. (10/103) There is a sense of familiarity that seems to help the trust issues and I feel that for some people, knowing that they can talk to me in their mother tongue, they feel and I feel as if they trust me more quickly. (15/163)*

However Efa mentions trust and safety in terms of the importance of her role in forging these conditions. Regardless of language she identifies that clients are able to display more trust when she displays confidence in herself:

*I think if you're there and you're relaxed, you're confident, I think clients then feel more trusting of you. (18/186)*

### **4.3 Barrier to Counselling Relationship**

#### **4.3.1 Impact of Language Proficiency**

The participants mention how they measure their counselling ability in terms of language proficiency. A lack of linguistic capability can have an impact on their practice therefore obstructing the counselling relationship and causing confidence issues and self-doubt.

Delyth mentions her lack of linguistic competence in implementing grammatically correct Welsh words which are not familiar to her. The pressure associated with using unaccustomed words seems to result in inadequacy:

*Regular people like me don't use the fancy Welsh words and then there's the pressure, you've chosen to do this in Welsh, we have to use all these big words and I can't use English. (17/183)*

Nia views herself as displaying a lack of linguistic proficiency in Welsh in terms of insufficient grammar. She too seems to experience a sense of pressure and inadequacy in terms of using Welsh words exclusively:

*I might apologise in advance to clients and say 'oh look I'm sorry you'll find me slipping English words in'. I feel a deficiency in my grammar in Welsh, so I feel more articulate in English. (6/72)*

Lowri describes her difficulty in translating Welsh counselling theory as a result of unfamiliarity with theoretical terms which can be problematic:

*It would be more complex and more complicated translating the theoretical side of things back into a language that wasn't used whilst I was training. (21/214)*

Efa's view of her lack of articulate expression in her second language is linked to her negative self-talk which results in harshness and self-doubt:

*Maybe that came out wrong and maybe I'm not doing what I should be doing properly. Sometimes I can be quite hard on myself so maybe that has an impact on me. (6/62)*

Gwion notices changes in how he now views his linguistic competence in Welsh since familiarising himself with particular counselling terminology. The process of translation resulted in a lack of availability and infrequent empathic understanding:

*I think it comes down to a part of the Welsh dictionary that I was not familiar with and I don't think I was that available in the Welsh language because I was thinking too much, because I was translating. It's something I notice now because those empathic moments come more frequently. (14/156)*

#### **4.3.2 More Effort**

The participants reveal that counselling in their less familiar and/or less confident languages can create difficulties therefore more effort is required.

Delyth describes her need to be more attentive to other verbal and non-verbal cues when the Welsh speaking client uses words which are less familiar to her and therefore she makes a greater effort to understand the client's communication:

*There's more need of the other things to get the meaning. There's greater need maybe for how they look, how they say it, the stuff that comes with it and there's more work to kind of get to it. (36/377)*

Lowri experiences greater difficulty in creating a relationship with an English speaking client who has a different and unfamiliar culture to herself and so makes more of an effort to understand the person:

*I suppose it is harder work. Creating that relationship, creating that bond with someone who isn't aware of these cultural issues takes more work. (7/82)*

The internal process that occurs within Efa as she works in English in her less confident language results in a more difficult experience. Therefore she makes more of an effort to ensure that she does not miss any of the client's verbal or non-verbal communication:

*Because you have to think and translate, it's more difficult. It gets more tiring because you don't want to miss anything but you're thinking about what you want to say in Welsh, but having to still listen in English, so that could have an impact on the relationship. (28/289)*

Gwion has made more of an effort to learn Welsh phrases which has previously been unfamiliar to him:

*I looked at my training manual and translated the phrases literally and got the meaning of them as opposed to the dictionary translation. (41/432)*

As a result of displaying less linguistic competence due to less familiarity of Welsh grammar and correctness, it is more challenging for Nia to reflect the client's communication in Welsh:

*I struggle sometimes when I'm working with a Welsh client to be able to reflect accurately back because my grammar is more limited. (13/141)*

#### **4.4 Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist**

Being a bilingual therapist benefits the participants and offers flexibility and provides them with a number of options according to the participants. All emphasise the significance of being able to offer choice of language provision to their clients.

##### **4.4.1 Flexibility**

Delyth's experience of being a bilingual therapist provides her with opportunities to switch from one language to the other:

*It gives me a lot of options. It allows me to move from one language to the other within a session or from one session to the other and I think that's pretty important. (48/498)*

Similarly Lowri appreciates the flexibility of being able to respond to the direction taken by the client by language switching:

*We will change from sentence to sentence sometimes without noticing that we're doing it, and it's more often that clients will come in and ask to speak English and then change to Welsh, that's the norm. (13/135)*

Likewise Gwion identifies the benefit of being able to offer the opportunity for his Welsh speaking clients to language switch:

*I'm counselling that person in English and they will switch into Welsh, especially when they're talking about childhood and that I think is a great service that I'm able to offer. (21/226)*

Efa recognises the advantages of being a Welsh speaking counsellor as she is able to assist the linguistic demand and has more options available to her:

*There isn't a lot of Welsh speaking counsellors and I've noticed I get more referrals so it's a benefit for me because I can work in both languages and a lot of people can't. (29/301)*

Nia describes her bilingualism in terms of how it can offer her flexibility in increased awareness of clients' cultural regard and understanding:

*I hope it makes me more flexible and it gives me some insight into respect for cultural differences. (26/269)*

#### **4.4.2 Choice**

As a bilingual therapist Lowri recognises that she is able to offer her clients choice of language during therapy:

*We often start off for example speaking one and changing to the other and vice versa and we have a discussion around that. Are you okay with this? Is it more comfortable? Is it less? Do you want to go back? (11/122)*

Delyth, for example, emphasises that the importance of allowing her adolescent clients the choice of which language to communicate can help to equalise the power imbalance within the relationship:

*What language do you want to speak in? You have your say, this is your choice, it is one of the ways to pass on some control. Really working to equalise that power relationship. (41/422)*

Efa affirms the importance of providing Welsh speaking clients with the opportunity of receiving therapy in their mother tongue:

*I think it's really important for the clients to be able to have their therapy in their first language. (29/304)*

Gwion additionally asserts the importance of giving clients the choice:

*I think it's important that the possibility or the availability is there for the client to choose. (10/102)*

Similarly Nia is aware of her ability as a bilingual therapist to respond to clients' preferred language choice:

*If they want to speak in Welsh I speak in Welsh, if they want to speak in English I speak in English. So I feel responsive to the demand." (5/48)*

#### **4.5 Summary of Findings**

All participants recognise differences in how they experience counselling in their mother tongue and non-mother tongue languages and the study's findings are consistent with the pre-existing research which will be further discussed and analysed in more detail in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter considers the participants experiences of providing counselling in their mother tongue and non-mother tongue languages by relating the findings to the existing research and theories on the topic. As a consequence of a broader and more thorough awareness and understanding of the available material on the subject, a more advanced exploration of the literature has been achieved. This chapter is arranged according to the four super-ordinate themes generated by the data. Although I will attempt to integrate the themes with the current literature my aim is to also highlight the uniqueness and divergence of each participant's personal experience. I have attempted to bracket off my personal assumptions and to work in a reflective and analytical manner to ensure that I have not prejudiced the data (Finlay, 2011).

The findings suggest some differences in how bilingual first language Welsh speaking counsellors experience their provision of therapy in their first and second languages. The research demonstrates how the apparent differences and changes can impact the therapeutic relationship. Differences in how the therapists view their own language-related experience; differences in their perception of establishing a counselling relationship and the inhibitory and facilitative aspects of creating a therapeutic alliance have been identified.

### **5.2 The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience**

The findings indicate that there are some differences in how the participants experience their counselling practice depending on the language spoken. Their professional identity development is connected to the languages spoken and the



majority of the participants describe a dual sense of self or dual identity which concurs with the existing literature. Bamford (1991) suggests that bilinguals possess a different way of representing themselves in each language whilst Rosenblum (2011) proposes that a person sounds and acts differently depending on the language spoken which is apparent for Delyth who notices “*In Welsh I am more expressive, friendly, chatty, talk faster*” (27/290). Languages consist of different world views and numerous bilinguals report encountering distinctly different experiences when speaking in each language according to Burck (1997). This is evident for Lowri who regards herself as an older, more professional therapist in English and in contrast is a younger, funnier therapist in Welsh (15/158). The concept of dual identity may be strengthened by other accounts of how different languages possess different emotional and cultural dimensions (Altarriba & Santiago Rivera, 1994; de Zulueta, 1995; Altarriba & Soltano, 1996) which resonate with the findings of this study.

The therapists in this research have been trained through the medium of English and it is apparent that the familiarity of the language of training affects how they experience counselling in their second language. English is viewed as the practitioners’ professional language as Nia mentions that “*My education and training had been in English*” (13/129) whilst Delyth asserts that “*I’m really familiar with talking about feelings in English, it’s what I’m used to*” (38/371). Furthermore the participants suggest that the language of their counselling training seem to influence how they view their capability and comfort in their practice. It’s “familiar” (Delyth, 38/371) and “*it was the language I was taught to counsel in*” (Lowri, 21/224). These findings concur with Connolly (2002), Jimenez (2004) and Burck (2004) who propose that familiarity with the language used can create a sense of

ease in therapy. However for Efa, although the language of training is familiar and the majority of her work is in English, it continues to cause difficulties as a result of the process of translation that occurs when counselling in her second language, which is absent amongst the other participants. Additionally as a trainee counsellor of 4 months, she is less experienced than the other participants. Many studies investigating the counselling experiences of bilingual therapists have demonstrated the difficulties that arise in the translation process when translating from one language to another (Sprowls, 2002; Biever et al. 2004). Efa has described *“it takes me more time I think to get the words right”* (3/26) which can have an impact on the flow of her sessions as well as how she feels about herself.

The passage of time as a sub-theme coincides with the findings of a study by Sella (2006) which demonstrates that therapists become more confident and comfortable in using their second language as time progresses. Similarly, the participants in this study noticed how they became more confident counselling in a language that had previously been difficult and/or unfamiliar as they became more experienced, with the progress of time. Efa supports the findings of Sella's (2006) study as she recognises that the more experienced she becomes the more comfortable and confident she becomes in her use of her second language and also mentions the belief that her practice *“over time it'll get better”* (16/173). Lowri uses adjectives such as “confident” and “comfortable” to describe the changes she has noticed within herself as she has become more experienced whilst “familiarity” and “sheer practice” over the years has influenced how Gwion currently perceives his counselling ability in his mother tongue which results in an increase in comfort levels. In contrast to Sella's (2006) study which only focuses on therapists' counselling in their second language, this study demonstrates that the passage of

time can also aid confidence and comfort for therapists working in their mother tongue, as displayed by Gwion.

### **5.3 Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance**

The data establishes how language plays a role in the counselling relationship. This study introduces aspects which are essential in developing a trusting and facilitative relationship with clients. Language and bilingualism in particular has the potential to create either connection and/or separation amongst individuals which is demonstrated within this research in its inhibitory and facilitative aspects. These findings will inevitably have important implications in terms of clinical practice in increasing our knowledge of how language can impact the counselling dyad and in facilitating a relationship where the core conditions are being provided.

Each participant describes a pre-existing understanding and connection that occurs when counselling clients who share the same mother tongue as themselves which can contribute to the enhancement of the therapeutic alliance. Lowri identified a pre-existing unspoken knowledge and “*the cultural connotations will be understood without words*” (5/63) whilst Delyth recognised how the “*familiarity*” (19/203) of each other’s backgrounds can aid the bond between them. Nia describes the phenomenon as “*almost tribal, it’s like with your family*” (8/74). This concept is supported by Segrott (2001) and Clifford (1997) who suggest that Welsh culture and language can shape distinct bonds of belonging and a mode of connecting to others. Furthermore Verdinelli and Biever (2009) also propose that sharing a similar background can result in a better understanding of the client and vice versa.

The existing literature commonly distinguishes a person's first language as acquiring distinct qualities (Pavlenko, 1996; Burck, 2004). The sense of ease in a first language as a sub-theme is reflected in this study's findings as the participants suggest an uninhibited mode which according to Burck (2004) can create a feeling of "being at home in it" (p.321). Efa describes counselling in Welsh as "*more natural*" (4/44), "*more comfortable*" (4/44) and as flowing easier than in English. Similarly, Nia experiences a sense of ease that occasionally happens quicker when counselling in her mother tongue (8/92). However it is important to note that the sense of ease does also occur when Nia is counselling in her second language but not as rapidly as in her mother tongue. The acceleration of ease is an aspect which doesn't seem to be identified in the existing literature and could therefore be a topic for future research.

An important aspect of language is its ability to provide safety and trust within the counselling relationship; a vital aspect of effective therapy (Proctor, 2002; Mearns & Thorne, 2007; Kennedy, 2013). Safety and trust as a sub-theme in this study demonstrates how implementing the mother tongue in counselling can assist the progress or/and hasten the development of trust and safety within the therapeutic alliance. By communicating with her Welsh speaking clients in their first language Delyth is transferring a message of safety which is associated with the familiarity and comfort that occurs in the mother tongue and which she describes as a rhythmic quality that "*I've felt it before, it comes from a safe place, this is okay*" (22/233). Likewise, Nia observes how the familiarity of the mother tongue can accelerate the development of trust as she mentions that "*they feel and I feel as if they trust me more quickly*" (15/163). The findings are consistent with current research which suggests that the use of the mother tongue in counselling is

generally viewed as a crucial aspect of facilitating a safe and trusting environment (LeDoux, 1998; Marian & Neisser, 2000; Merry, 2002; Damasio, 2003; Tehrani & Vaughan, 2009).

#### **5.4 Barrier to Counselling Relationship**

The participants describe specific aspects of language that can subsequently hinder the counselling relationship. A predominant barrier to therapy is the impact of limited linguistic proficiency which can result in therapist negative self-talk. Costa (2010) suggests that an inability to converse eloquently can create a sense of inadequacy. Insufficient Welsh grammar results in Nia apologising to her clients in advance, *“I’m sorry you’ll find me slipping English words in”* (6/72) which seems to suggest a feeling of insufficiency. Efa’s inarticulacy in English is associated with her negative self-talk which results in self-doubt as *“Maybe that came out wrong and maybe I’m not doing what I should be doing properly”* (6/62). All five participants substantiated the findings from other studies which suggest that deficient linguistic proficiency can diminish counsellors’ ability to understand their clients’ communication resulting in impeding the establishment of a therapeutic relationship (Verdinelli, 2006; Skulic, 2007). However Jimenez (2004) suggests that if therapists are able to tolerate feelings associated with their incompetence in the client’s language then it can positively affect the therapeutic alliance. Alternatively as described by Efa, if therapists become consumed by negative self-talk due to their linguistic insufficiency, it can limit their responses to clients (Verdinelli, 2006) and moreover can affect the therapist’s empathic understanding (Skulic, 2007).

This study's findings display that providing therapy in the therapists less familiar and/or less confident languages can cause problems which results in a requirement to make more of an effort. Working with Welsh clients who use unfamiliar Welsh terminology results in Delyth mentioning a "*greater need for how they look, how they say it, the stuff that comes with it, and there's more work to kind of get to it*" (36/377). Efa similarly makes more of an effort in English to ensure that she doesn't fail to notice any of the client's communication as "*It gets more tiring because you don't want to miss anything*" (28/289). Lowri notices that "*creating that relationship, creating that bond with someone that isn't aware of these cultural issues takes more work*" (7/82). Research by Bowker and Richards (2004) support the participants' views of the requirement to make an extra effort to listen carefully to the client's meanings at all levels in an attempt to bridge the gap and to connect with them. Similarly Jimenez (2004) suggests that therapists counselling in their second language are even more dependent on the non-verbal cues expressed by clients. Skulic (2007) argues that regardless of language proficiency an establishment of a strong counselling relationship is possible if the therapist is capable of communicating non-verbally with the client and consequently creating an empathic and supportive environment.

### **5.5 Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist**

Some research suggest that the therapist's bilingualism may assist the process of therapy (Skulic, 2007; Kennedy, 2013) as is also supported by this study. Burck (2004) demonstrates that bilingual therapists exhibit more flexibility in the uses of language in counselling. The participants of this study recognise distinct benefits that arise as a result of being bilingual. Speaking more than one language provide them with both flexibility and choice in their provision of counselling in Welsh and in

English. Delyth, Gwion and Lowri comment that they are able to language switch in order to respond to the client's wishes and to create ease. *"It allows me to move from one language to the other"* (48/498) according to Delyth whilst Gwion mentions that *"I'm counselling that person in English and they will switch into Welsh, especially when they're talking about childhood and that I think is a great service that I'm able to offer"* (21/226). These findings are supported by other research which reinforces the participants' experiences by demonstrating that bilingual therapists have a unique technical advantage in their use of language switching as a method of engaging with both of the client's languages (Marcos & Alpert, 1976). An additional benefit of switching languages is its ability to strengthen the bond between client and therapist (Santiago-Rivera et al. 2009). Nia describes how being bilingual can offer her flexibility in terms of assisting cultural understanding of her clients as it gives her *"some insight into respect for cultural differences"* (26/269). This notion is emphasised by Grosjean (as cited in Costa, 2010) who suggests that being bilingual can create more open-mindedness towards minority groups and an increased awareness of possible linguistic difficulties which can inform greater knowledge. Additionally Alessi (2000) proposes that bilingual therapists have the advantage of possessing greater cultural sensitivity as a result of shared understanding of the bilingual experience.

All participants highlight the advantage of being able to offer their clients the choice of which language to speak. As a bilingual therapist Nia emphasises that *"if they want to speak in Welsh I speak in Welsh, if they want to speak in English I speak in English"* (5/48). Similarly Lowri is able to ask her clients *"Are you okay with this? Is it more comfortable? Is it less? Do you want to go back?"* (11/122), whilst Gwion asserts *"I think it's important that the possibility or the availability is there for the*

*client to choose*" (10/102). These findings coincide with other research studies which accept the importance of giving clients the choice of their preferred language in counselling (Foster, 1996; Madoc-Jones, 2004; Kennedy, 2013; Roberts, 2013). Madoc-Jones (2004) argues that service provision in the individual's chosen language is imperative, especially for Welsh clients, considering the oppression that they may experience as a result of lack of services in their mother tongue. In order to ensure equality and effective healthcare, linguistically sensitive services in Wales is vital. Likewise Misell (2000) claims that providing language choice to clients is the foundation of implementing linguistically and culturally diverse healthcare.

## **5.6 Summary**

The research appears to sit alongside pre-existing literature which suggests differences in the way counsellors experience providing therapy in their first and second languages and the subsequent impact on the therapeutic relationship. All participants highlight themes pertinent to current research and an important finding in this chapter is that the therapists recognise difficulties and advantages associated with their bilingualism as well as associated phenomena that emerges in relation to it. The following chapter will consolidate the key findings of this study and offer suggestions for further research.



## **Conclusion: Chapter 6**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This study has investigated whether bilingual Welsh first language counsellors encounter differences counselling in their mother tongue and in their non-mother tongue languages and how this may impact the therapeutic relationship. The data is unique as there is no current research available that examines Welsh speaking counsellors' views of providing therapy in their first and second languages. These findings echo existing themes in other research studies with participants detailing the importance of considering the role of language in counselling and in the counselling relationship (Clauss, 1998; Bowker & Richards, 2004; Burck, 2004; Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2004; Skulic, 2007; Rosenblum, 2011; Costa & Dewaele, 2012).

It is apparent that sharing the same mother tongue as a client can bring distinct qualities to the therapeutic alliance. This research does not suggest that providing therapy in the therapist's second language is ineffective or that a solid counselling relationship cannot be achieved. The participants express a different sense of self depending on the language spoken, a pre-existing understanding and sense of ease that occurs when working with a client who share the same mother tongue and a facilitation of the development of safety and trust that seems to emerge when counselling clients in their first language. These findings also demonstrate how the familiarity of the language of training, which is the participants' second language, has a positive impact on how they view their ability within their practice and how the passage of time can have a beneficial effect on the language that had previously been difficult and/or less familiar. The study also highlights specific factors that can be a barrier to the counselling relationship such as the therapist's

lack of linguistic proficiency and a requirement to demonstrate more effort in their less familiar and/or less confident languages. However, the research suggests that therapists may use their linguistic experiences creatively and enhance the therapy by providing more flexibility and choice to clients.

## **6.2 Implications for practice**

The research findings may be useful in informing other practitioners working with bilingual and/or multilingual clients where English is not their mother tongue and they may provide valuable insights in other bilingual settings. An increase in understanding about bilingualism will aid other countries where bilingualism exists particularly with the current flow of mass immigration across Europe.

Results imply that discussions need to be introduced so that all practitioners acknowledge and appreciate language issues faced by bilingual therapists (Iannaco, 2009), consequently increasing the development and improvement of their knowledge (Rosenblum, 2011). Language differences should be discussed in training courses and in supervision aiding our understanding of linguistic and culturally sensitive healthcare benefitting counsellors and clients alike. The majority of the participants in this study emphasise the importance of training course provision through the medium of Welsh for counsellors working in Wales. This could be especially significant for therapists similar to Efa who lack confidence in their linguistic ability in their second language that can subsequently hinder their practice.

The importance of therapists being aware of how they view their language-related issues and linguistic selves is suggested. A deep and rigorous understanding of their own bilingual processes can influence the way they perceive themselves,

their work and their clients which will inevitably benefit the counselling dyad. A lack of personal awareness can have unfavourable implications in therapy, for example, if they are plagued by negative self-talk.

### **6.3 Further Research**

This is a small scale research project and although generalisation cannot be made there are important insights that warrant consideration and further investigation. As this is the first study of its kind in Wales there is considerable scope for additional research. Relatively little is written on bilingualism in relation to the counselling relationship and the core conditions. Research in this area could explore the technically linguistic processes such as language switching and the consequences of the translation process for Welsh bilinguals. Whilst this study investigates therapists working in their first and second languages I propose that additional research in the area of non-mother tongue could investigate specific factors such as the level of the clinician's linguistic competence in their non-mother tongue language and the impact on the effectiveness of therapy. Research on counsellor training being undertaken in a therapist's second language and the impact on their work with clients also remains largely unexplored. This includes the impact of therapists' own personal counselling and supervision being applied in their second language.

Finally as expressed in the 'Limitations' section it is possible that some aspects of the participants' experiences could not be fully accessed through the medium of English and therefore some meaning may have been lost. As this study considers the differences between counselling in the mother tongue and non-mother tongue languages, research could be conducted through the medium of Welsh. However I

am confident that by being a Welsh speaker myself, by being honest and transparent about the limitations from the offset and by member checking that these limiting aspects have been reduced.

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## **Appendix 1**

### Research Strategy Literature Review

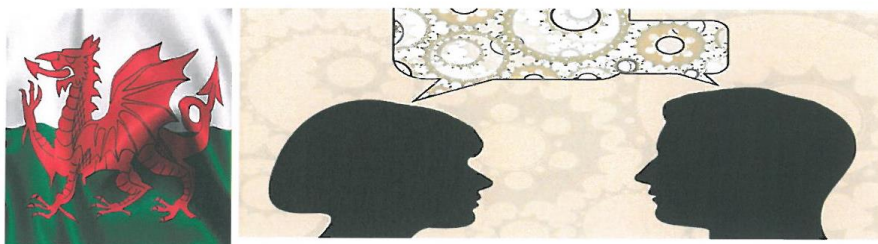
| <b>KEY WORDS</b>              | <b>DATABASES/RESOURCES</b>           |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Counselling                   | PsycINFO                             |
| Counseling                    | CINAHL                               |
| Psychotherapy                 | PubMed                               |
| Therapy                       | BACP                                 |
| Bilingual(ism)                | SocINDEX                             |
| Welsh                         | Science Direct                       |
| Mother tongue                 | Taylor & Francis Online              |
| First language                | Wiley Online Library                 |
| Native language               | Chester University Library Catalogue |
| Minority language             | The British Library Catalogue        |
| Second language               | Bangor University Library Catalogue  |
| Non-mother tongue             |                                      |
| English                       |                                      |
| Bilingual Counselling         |                                      |
| Welsh Counselling             |                                      |
| Welsh Counsellors             |                                      |
| English Counsellors           |                                      |
| Counsellors Perceptions       |                                      |
| Therapists Perceptions        |                                      |
| First language Counselling    |                                      |
| Second language Counselling   |                                      |
| Culture                       |                                      |
| Identity                      |                                      |
| Therapeutic                   |                                      |
| Empathy                       |                                      |
| Congruence                    |                                      |
| Unconditional positive regard |                                      |
| Core conditions               |                                      |
| Therapeutic Relationship      |                                      |

## Appendix 2

Bilingual advert / poster.

### **YMCHWIL / RESEARCH:**

#### Cwnselwyr Cymraeg iaith gyntaf yn cwnsela yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg Counselling in a mother-tongue and non-mother tongue language



**Yn eisiau gan fyfyrwraig MA ym Mhrifysgol Gaer – Cwnselwyr person-ganolog (person-centred) cymwys a cwnselwyr dan hyfforddiant dwyieithog (Cymraeg-Saesneg) i gymryd rhan mewn astudiaeth am gwnsela drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Bydd yr ymchwil yn canolbwyntio ar sut/os yw cwnsela yn y famiaith ac yn yr ail iaith yn wahanol gan archwilio sut/os yw yn effeithio ar y berthynas gwnsela.**

**Os mai Cymraeg yw eich iaith gyntaf a rydych yn gweithio drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, buaswn yn gwerthfawrogi eich cyfraniad i'r ymchwil. Os oes ganddoch ddiddordeb cymryd rhan mi fyddai'n golygu cyfweiliad rhwng 30-60 munud (sy'n cael ei recordio) yn trafod eich profiad o gwnsela yn y ddwy iaith. Trefnir cyfarfod mewn lle ac amser sy'n hwylus i chi.**

**Diolch.**

***Wanted by Chester University MA student - Qualified and trainee bilingual (Welsh-English) person-centred counsellors to participate in a study investigating their experiences of providing therapy in their mother-tongue (Welsh) and in their non-mother tongue language (English). The research will focus on differences that may emerge and to explore in what ways might this impact the counselling relationship.***

***If you are a first language Welsh speaker working in Welsh and English I would really appreciate your contribution to this research. Participation will include a 30-60 minute audio-taped interview exploring your experience of providing therapy in Welsh and in English. Interviews can be arranged at a location and time to suit you. If you are interested in participating, please contact me on the details below.***

***Thank you.***



**Cyswllt / Contact: Rhian Haf Williams  
Ebst / Email: \*\*\*\*\*@chester.ac.uk  
Ffôn / Phone: \*\*\*\*\***

### **Appendix 3**

Letter to an Organisation.



To whom it may concern,

I am a third year post graduate student at University of Chester studying for an MA in Clinical Counselling. I am conducting a study to explore bilingual (Welsh-English) counsellors experiences of counselling in a mother tongue and in a non-mother tongue language. The research will focus on differences that may emerge and to explore in what ways might this impact the counselling relationship.

I am now recruiting participants for my study and I would be very grateful if you would be so kind as to allow me to advertise at your organisation by circulating my email to your students/colleagues and appropriate persons. If you are also willing for me to advertise at the establishment I will arrange to bring flyers and distribute them at the location.

I attach a copy of my advert and information sheet.

If you would like further information please contact me by either emailing [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@chester.ac.uk](mailto:*****@chester.ac.uk) or phoning \*\*\*\*\*.

Many thanks and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Rhian Williams (MA PGDip)

.....



I bwy bynnag a fynno,

Rwy'n fyfyrwraig ôl-radd yn astudio cwrs MA Clinical Counselling ym Mhrifysgol Gaer. Rwy'n cynnal astudiaeth i archwilio profiadau cwnselwyr dwyieithog (Cymraeg-Saesneg) o gwnsela drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Bydd yr ymchwil yn canolbwyntio ar sut neu os yw cwnsela yn y famiaith ac yn yr ail iaith yn wahanol gan archwilio sut neu os yw yn effeithio ar y berthynas gwnsela.

Rwyf ar hyn o bryd yn recriwtio unigolion i fod yn ran o fy astudiaeth a mi fuaswn i'n hynod ddiolchgar petai modd i chi fod mor garedig â hysbysebu fy ngwaith ymchwil yn eich sefydliad drwy ddosbarthu fy ebost i fyfyrwyr/cydweithwyr ag

unigolion perthnasol. Os ydych chi'n fodlon i mi hysbysebu yn eich sefydliad mi fydd modd i mi ddod â thaflenni hysbysebu atoch a'u gosod yn yr adeilad.

Rwy'n atodi/amgau copi o'r hysbyseb yn ogystal â'r ddalen wybodaeth.

Os oes angen gwybodaeth bellach arnoch a fydddech chi mor garedig ag ebostio [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@chester.ac.uk](mailto:*****@chester.ac.uk) neu ffonio \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\* \*\*.

Diolch yn fawr ac edrychaf ymlaen at glywed nôl ganddoch chi.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir

Rhian Williams (MA PGDip)

## **Appendix 4**

Research Information Sheet.

### **Research Information Sheet**

**Title of dissertation:** An exploration of bilingual (Welsh-English) person-centred counsellors experiences of counselling in a mother tongue and in a non-mother tongue language.

**About me:** I am a third year post graduate student at Chester University studying for an MA in Clinical Counselling. I am a bilingual first language Welsh-speaking counsellor working through the medium of Welsh and English.

**My Research:** Some studies indicate that counsellors' bilingualism has important implications in the therapeutic alliance yet there is limited research that investigates counsellors' experiences of working bilingually. No research exists that investigates first language Welsh counsellors' views of counselling in their mother tongue (Welsh) and in their non-mother tongue language (English). I hope that this study will strengthen our understanding of how Welsh-speaking counsellors experience working in both languages, exploring any differences that may emerge and contributing to the wider literature on mother tongue and non-mother tongue in counselling.

**Selection of Participants:** I am seeking qualified and trainee bilingual counsellors who: are person-centred in orientation, are fluent in English, consider Welsh as their first language, have current or recent experience of working in Welsh and English, have access to supervision and are members of the BACP or equivalent professional organisation. I will recruit on the basis of those offering the most variability to my sample. For example, I would like to recruit both qualified and trainee counsellors from a variety of agency settings.

**What does participating in this research mean?** If you meet the inclusion criteria your involvement will be an hour long audio-recorded interview at a mutually convenient, safe and confidential location. After the interview, I will transcribe the audio-recording and I will send you a copy of the transcript for you to check for accuracy. Your data will be analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis methods and will then be compared to the data from other participants to identify themes.

**What are the potential risks?** This study does *not* aim to investigate the content of your counselling sessions but rather the language that you use. However, it is possible that in doing so, that it could lead to you exploring difficult and/or sensitive issues that you have experienced whilst working with clients. If this were the case, I hope that you can access the support of your supervisor and I will also provide you with a list of BACP registered counsellors should you wish to seek counselling.

**Benefits of the research:** The potential benefit for participants is gaining greater awareness of how they experience working in both languages that could aid future practice with both Welsh and English speaking clients. The research could give

participants an opportunity to have their voices heard in an area that is often unrecognised by contributing to the wider literature on mother tongue and non-mother tongue in counselling and providing insights for monolingual, bilingual and multilingual therapists alike.

**Right to Withdraw:** All participants have the right to withdraw without any negative impact up until the beginning of the writing up of the dissertation.

**Confidentiality** Throughout the research process I will ensure that your anonymity is protected by allocating a pseudonym to all information relating to your involvement in the project. Any information or parts of the interview which may identify you or any of your clients will not be included in the research. With your consent, verbatim sections of the interview may be used in the final dissertation.

**What will happen to the results:** The results will form part of my MA dissertation which will be submitted to Chester University who will keep a copy and the dissertation may also be available electronically. The results may also form part of other works which are put forward for publication.

**Data Protection:** My data will consist of both audio recordings which will be recorded onto a digital recorder which will be securely stored and transcriptions of interviews as electronic files that will be password protected. Recordings will be transferred onto my PC, the files will be password protected and saved under a pseudonym that will be used throughout the research so that individuals may not be recognised from the file name. A back up copy of the files will be held on a USB pen drive which will be kept in a locked cabinet.

**Ethics:** The research has been approved by the University's Ethics Committee and I intend to conduct my research in accordance with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice and the University's Research Governance Handbook in order to protect participants from harm and loss and to enhance the trustworthiness of my study. I am aware that ethical issues are not resolved in the planning stages but need to be kept in focus throughout; I therefore intend to work with my supervisor to look at ethical issues for the duration of the project.

**Concerns or Complaints:** If there are any concerns or complaints, these can be directed to my research supervisor, Dr. Valda Swinton (see below for details). Formal complaints about the research should be made to the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

**My details:** Rhian Williams, [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@chester.ac.uk](mailto:*****@chester.ac.uk) or \*\*\*\* \* \*\* \*.

**Supervisor's details:** Dr. Valda Swinton, [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@chester.ac.uk](mailto:*****@chester.ac.uk)

## **Appendix 4b**

Welsh version of Research Information Sheet.

### **Ymchwil: Taflen Wybodaeth**

**Teitl y gwaith ymchwil:** An exploration of bilingual (Welsh-English) person-centred counsellors experiences of counselling in a mother tongue and in a non-mother tongue language.

**Amdanaf i:** Rwyf yn fyfyrwraig ôl-radd yn astudtio cwrs MA Clinical Counselling ym Mhrifysgol Gaer. Rwy'n gwnselydd Cymraeg iaith gyntaf dwyieithog yn gweithio drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

**Y gwaith ymchwil:** Mae rhai astudiaethau yn mynegi fod gan ddwyieithrwydd y cwnselydd goblygiadau pwysig o safbwynt y berthynas therapiwtig. Ond ceir ymchwil cyfyngedig sy'n archwilio profiadau cwnselwyr o weithio'n ddwyieithog. Ni cheir unrhyw waith ymchwil sy'n astudio daliadau cwnselwyr Cymraeg iaith gyntaf o weithio yn eu mamiaith (Cymraeg) ac yn eu hail-iaith (Saesneg). Rwy'n gobeithio y bydd yr astudiaeth hon yn cryfhau ein dealltwriaeth o sut mae cwnselwyr Cymraeg iaith gyntaf yn gweithio yn y ddwy iaith gan archwilio unrhyw wahaniaethau a all ymddangos a fydd yn y pendraw yn cyfrannu at ymchwil ar famiaith a'r ail iaith ym maes therapi.

**Dewis unigolion:** Rwy'n chwilio am gwnselwyr person-ganolog (*person-centred*) cymwys a cwnselwyr dan hyfforddiant sydd yn rhugl yn y Saesneg; yn ystyried Cymraeg fel eu hiaith gyntaf; sydd ar hyn o bryd neu yn ddiweddar yn cwnsela yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg; sydd â mynediad i oruchwyliwr (*supervisor*) ac sydd yn aelod o BACP neu gorff proffesiynol cyffelyb. Byddaf yn recriwtio unigolion fydd yn cynnig yr amrywioldeb mwyaf i fy sampl, er enghraifft, rwy'n awyddus i recriwtio cwnselwyr cymwys a cwnselwyr dan hyfforddiant o sefydliadau gwahanol.

**Beth a olygir wrth gymryd rhan?** Os ydych yn cwrdd â gofynion y meini prawf mi fydd eich ymrwymiad yn golygu awr o gyfweiliad fydd yn cael ei recordio mewn lleoliad cyfleus, diogel a phreifat. Yn dilyn y cyfweiliad mi fyddaf yn trawsgrifio y cyfweiliad ac mi fyddaf yn anfon copi ohono atoch er mwyn sicrhau cywirdeb. Bydd y data yn cael ei ddadansoddi gan ddefnyddio math benodol o ddadansoddiad o'r enw interpretative phenomenological analysis. Yna byddaf yn cymharu'r data gyda data unigolion eraill gan geisio canfod ac adnabod themâu.

**Beth yw'r risgiau posib?** Nid yw'r astudiaeth hon yn bwriadu archwilio cynnwys eich sesiynau cwnsela ond yn hytrach yr iaith a ddefnyddir ganddoch. Er hynny mae'n bosib wrth i chi drafod hynny y byddwch yn archwilio materion anodd a sensitif rydych wedi eu profi wrth weithio gyda eich cleientiaid. Petai hynny'n digwydd, rwy'n gobeithio y bydd modd i chi holi am gefnogaeth eich goruchwyliwr a byddaf hefyd yn darparu rhestr o gwnselwyr BACP cofrestredig os byddwch yn penderfynu eich bod eisiau sesiynau cwnsela.



**Manteision y gwaith ymchwil:** Y budd posib i unigolion yw i gynyddu ymwybyddiaeth o sut maent yn teimlo am weithio yn y ddwy iaith a fyddai'n medru cynorthwyo eu cwnsela wrth weithio â chleientiaid Cymraeg a Saesneg. Gall y gwaith ymchwil hwn roi llais i unigolion mewn maes nad yw'n aml yn cael ei gydnabod, gan gyfrannu at yr ymchwil ar famiaith a'r ail iaith ym maes therapi gan daflu goleuni pellach ar gyfer therapyddion uniaith, ddwyieithog ac amlieithog.

**Hawl i dynnu nôl:** Mae gan bob unigolyn hawl i dynnu nôl o'r astudiaeth heb effaith negyddol hyd nes y byddaf yn cychwyn ysgrifennu'r traethawd estynedig.

**Cyfrinachedd:** Drwy gydol y broses ymchwilio mi fyddaf yn sicrhau fod anhysbysrwydd unigolion yn cael ei ddiogelu gan bennu ffugenw i bob darn o wybodaeth a all arwain at bobol yn adnabod pwy ydych chi neu un o'ch cleientiaid. Ni fydd unrhyw wybodaeth neu ddarn o gyfweiliad a all arwain at hynny gael ei gynnwys yn yr ymchwil. Mae'n bosib y bydd eich geiriau o'r cyfweiliad yn cael eu cynnwys yn y traethawd gorffenedig, gyda eich caniatâd.

**Beth fydd yn digwydd i'r canlyniadau:** Bydd y canlyniadau yn ffurfio rhan o fy nhraethawd estynedig MA a fydd yn cael ei gyflwyno i Brifysgol Caer. Byddant yn cadw copi o'r traethawd ac efallai bydd y traethawd hefyd yn bodoli yn electronig. Gall y canlyniadau hefyd ffurfio rhan o weithiau eraill y bydd yn cael eu cyhoeddi.

**Diogelwch Data:** Bydd y data yn cynnwys recordiadau sain a recordir ar ddictaffon ac y bydd yn cael eu storio yn ddiogel dan glo. Bydd y trawsgrifiadau o gyfweiliadau yn cael eu storio fel ffeiliau electronig ar gyfrifiadur fydd wedi eu diogelu â chyfrinair a'u henwi gyda ffugenw er mwyn sicrhau nad oes modd adnabod yr unigolion o enw'r ffeil. Bydd copi wrth gefn o'r ffeiliau yn cael eu cadw ar ddisg USB a fydd yn cael ei gadw mewn cabinet clöedig.

**Moeseg:** Mae'r gwaith ymchwil wedi cael ei dderbyn gan Bwyllgor Moeseg y Brifysgol a rwy'n bwriadu gweithredu fy ngwaith ymchwil yn unol â 'British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice' a Llawlyfr Rheolaeth Ymchwil y Brifysgol er mwyn diogelu unigolion rhag niwed a cholled ac er mwyn gwella credadwyedd a hygyrdd fy ngwaith ymchwil. Rwy'n ymwybodol nad oes modd datrys materion etheg a moeseg yn ystod y cyfnod cynllunio ond rwy'n bwriadu cadw hynny mewn cof drwy gydol yr holl broses drwy drafod unrhyw faterion a phroblemau gyda fy ngoruchwyliwr ymchwil.

**Pryderon neu Cwynion:** Os oes unrhyw bryderon neu cwynion mae modd cysylltu gyda fy ngoruchwyliwr, Dr. Valda Swinton (gweler manylion isod). Mae angen i gwynion ffurfiol ynglŷn â'r ymchwil gael eu cyfeirio at Deon Cyfadrn y Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol.

**Fy manylion:** Rhian Williams, [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@chester.ac.uk](mailto:*****@chester.ac.uk) neu \*\*\*\* \* \* \* \*.

**Manylion Goruchwyliwr:** Dr. Valda Swinton, [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@chester.ac.uk](mailto:*****@chester.ac.uk)

## **Appendix 5**

Pre-interview Questionnaire.



### **Pre-interview Questionnaire**

Name and contact details (tel, email, address):

Age:

Sex:

Are you a qualified or trainee counsellor?

Type of therapy:

What would you consider to be your mother tongue?

Since when have you been working and/or volunteering as a counsellor?

When did you begin your counsellor training and when did/does it end?

In what language did you undertake your counsellor training?

Since when have you been providing counselling through the medium of Welsh and English?

Are you currently providing therapy in Welsh and in English?

If not, when was the last time you provided therapy in Welsh and in English?

Are you a member of BACP or equivalent Professional Organisation?

Do you have access to Supervision?

## **Appendix 6**

### Interview Schedule for Participants.

#### **Interview Questions**

**Introduction:** Thank you for coming – I would like us to spend the next hour exploring your experience of counselling in your mother tongue and in your non-mother tongue language. I have prepared some questions for you and there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in understanding how you experience working in both languages, and how this may in turn have an affect on the counselling relationship.

\*(Ensure consent form is signed)\*

Do you have any questions about the process before we start?

1. Can you please explain when you learned your first and second language and the context in which you have developed and used both languages'.  
(*language used at home, school, Uni, language used at work*)

2. From a counsellor's perspective how would you compare counselling in your mother tongue and counselling in your second language?

(Prompt) – **Differences / similarities**- What are the differences, if there are any, between counselling in your mother tongue and counselling in your second language?

3. What feelings are evoked within you when you are counselling in Welsh and counselling in English and are you aware of feeling different when counselling in either language?

(Prompt) – **Confidence / self-consciousness** - Some research suggests that bilingual counsellors feel self-conscious or less confident when speaking in their second language – what are your thoughts on this and how might this affect the counselling relationship?

(Prompt) – **Comfort and ease** - How comfortable do you feel speaking in both your first and second language?

4. Have you noticed any differences within the counselling relationship when you are counselling in Welsh and when you are counselling in English?

5. Some researchers have suggested that bilingual therapists experience a different sense of self depending on the language they speak and that we are not our true selves when speaking our second language. What are your thoughts on this and how might this impact the counselling relationship?

6. As you gain more experience, have you noticed any changes in how you feel about your own ability when counselling in your second language?

7. Do you feel differently towards a client who shares the same mother tongue as you compared to a client who does not? Please elaborate.

8. To what extent do you think that being a first language Welsh speaker influences how you are as a counsellor and your interaction with your English and Welsh speaking clients? (*Does it have an impact on your work / more awareness/Flexibility*)

Is there anything that you would like to add/include?

**Closing:** Thank you for your participation. I will now be transcribing the recording of this session and I will then send you a copy of the transcription for you to check for accuracy. Once you have checked it I will begin my analysis and then compare it to the analysis of other data. Your anonymity will be maintained throughout.

## Appendix 7

Example of initial noting of transcript.

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>• Welsh sense of self</p>   | <p>A: 141 I think in Welsh obviously I'm me. I can be<br/>142 me, I can talk like I want to talk, it flows freely,<br/>143 and I feel more comfortable. In English it's<br/>144 different because it's still me but it's different,<br/>145 it's a different sense I think, because it doesn't<br/>146 feel as comfortable in English and I think I'm<br/>147 not truly being myself in English maybe<br/>148 because I have to think more and maybe give<br/>149 the expression 'oh yeah I am fine, I'm OK, I<br/>150 can talk in English, I'm fine'. But in Welsh I'm<br/>151 more relaxed and I'm more me I think in<br/>152 Welsh.</p>   | <p>Being herself in Welsh<br/>Difference between Welsh + English sense of self<br/>"I'm me", flows freely, comfortable, more relaxed, more me (in mother-tongue)</p>  |
|  | <p>Q: 153 So there's a sense of you being your true self,<br/>154 a more real you in Welsh compared to in<br/>155 English?</p>   | <p>A true + more real self in Welsh?</p>  |
| <p>• Real + true self in Welsh</p>                                     | <p>A: 156 Yeah, I would say so, yes, just kind of being<br/>157 more me, more relaxed I think in Welsh, than<br/>158 having to think more in English. It's still me<br/>159 and I still feel like I give my best but I think it's<br/>160 more difficult in your second language and<br/>161 don't think you can be your true self when<br/>162 you're thinking all the time in Welsh and trying<br/>163 to translate into English. I think it's more me in<br/>164 Welsh I think, more relaxed and more<br/>165 confident. I would say that I was much more<br/>166 confident in Welsh than in English, it's<br/>167 because I'm used to talking in Welsh and kind<br/>168 of being around people that are Welsh<br/>169 maybe. In English maybe not as confident<br/>170 because, because of trying to find the words,<br/>171 you have to think more and sometimes things<br/>172 that you say they don't come out right in<br/>173 English, I think they come out better in Welsh.<br/>174 You are more confident I think speaking in<br/>175 your first language.</p> | <p>"more me", "more relaxed"<br/>- sense of ease in mother-tongue?<br/>Difficultly in English<br/>Impact of linguistic competence on perception of self - sounds of difficult / more constrained?<br/>Not a true self in English<br/>Lack of confidence<br/>Internal process - searching for words / thinking more / - more effort?<br/>More confident in mother-tongue</p> |
| <p>• Impact of Language Proficiency</p>                                | <p>Q: 175 That confidence you mention when you're<br/>176 counselling in Welsh, can you explain to me<br/>177 how that then impacts your practice?</p>   | <p>Impact on practice?</p>  |
| <p>• Immediacy in Welsh<br/>• More effort in building relationship</p> | <p>A: 178 I think it takes more time in English, maybe to,<br/>179 maybe to get to know your client better, I think<br/>180 in Welsh you click with the same person, I<br/>181 think in English for me maybe there's a slight<br/>182 delay in that relationship building. But I don't<br/>183 think it has a big impact on my practice, but it<br/>184 does have a maybe a slight - 'It's not as, it's<br/>185 not as good in English as it would be in Welsh<br/>186 I think. It takes longer for that relationship to<br/>187 build.</p>  | <p>English - taking more time to get to know client - more effort?<br/>"Welsh you click" - sense of it falling into place / it fits.<br/>English - slight delay in building relationship - happens slower?<br/>No huge impact on practice<br/>"Not as good" in English - sounds 'stranger' / more effective in Welsh?</p>   |

## Appendix 8

Example of noting of transcript.

| Emergent Themes  | Original Transcript   | Exploratory Comments   |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Language as an issue</p> <p>Language and power relationship/ Equality</p> <p>Welsh clients and Familiarity</p> <p>Welsh language and professionalism / pressure to relationship</p> <p>Welsh vocab can cause apprehension – more of issue for her than clients?</p> <p>Her inadequacy/lack of confidence in using welsh vocab?</p> <p>Unfamiliar Welsh vocab.</p> | <p>And the way that I counsel is actually different now that I'm thinking about it in that way, because from the moment we meet, it's almost like the first thing you know, what language are we doing this in? And then the kind of associated feelings on their part and my part about what it means, about what language we're using, and how comfortable we're feeling and I think it adds a bit to an element of the power relationship I think, and kind of equality in the relationship. And it's less I think with Welsh people, so I'll say Cymraeg neu Saesneg? 'Cymraeg', OK and then that's almost like we go into this familiar thing that, I think that's what I mean with the familiarity, it's almost like we knew each other, not , not I don't want to sound unprofessional or anything but it's, there is a familiarity there. But then it can be a bit of a problem sometimes, even with Welsh because the consent form is full of you know, professional (<i>accent here</i>) Welsh words and sometimes you know, regular people like me we don't use the fancy Welsh words, and then there's the pressure then, you've chosen to do this in Welsh, we have to use all these big words and I can't use English, you know so I think they can be a bit nervous then, they say 'oh but I don't know', they see the consent form and they go 'I'm not sure you know', and I'm like 'oh it doesn't matter would you rather have the English one?' So it's definitely an issue which I'm and maybe its me more than the clients I don't know, but it feels like an issue and also they'll be a bit nervous about agreeing to do it in Welsh and they'll go well I'm not sure if I know all these Welsh words and I'll just say we'll just, usually say if we want to we can just speak Wenglish or something you know, I'm happy. And I think I make an effort to throw in some English</p> | <p>Difference in way she counsels</p> <p>Equalising power</p> <p>Welsh clients- a familiar type process – <u>different to English clients</u><br/> <i>'goes into' – suggests a process/pattern</i><br/> <i>Familiar 'thing' – doesn't sound like it's something definitive, obvious and concrete – it's a bit ambiguous and hard to define and describe</i><br/> <i>'Professional' – placing accent on this word – placing more emphasis</i><br/> <u>Slightly out of touch / formal/authoritative?</u><br/> <u>Tension in how she doesn't want to be a power figure</u><br/> <u>Regular people like me – she's normal/ordinary – wanting to display this to her clients? Is she belittling herself?</u></p> <p><u>Welsh language – brings pressure to relationship – the big words</u><br/> <u>Welsh language - Fancy welsh words – sounds alien to her / aren't in her normal, everyday vocab</u><br/>         Choosing to be counselled in Welsh can bring some pressure – 'we must use the fancy big words' – she feels pressure and client feels pressure – can't turn back – can't use any English – <u>it feels very rigid/fixed/inflexible</u></p> <p><u>Maybe more about her feelings around inadequacy / lack of confidence in using welsh vocab?</u></p> |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Welsh and Familiarity                                 | <p>words sometimes Um -- just to kind of, I think it's got a lot to do with the power and wanting them to feel comfortable and not feeling the pressure of speaking something perfectly and that's not the thing here you know.</p> <p>I: What you were saying about the 'familiarity thing', can you tell me a bit more about that?</p> <p>I think it's more of a kind of rhythm actually than anything else when I'm thinking about it. It's almost like a beat or something and it's like you're kind of moving to a particular beat. And I feel like speaking Welsh it's like moving from one beat to another, and being on the same beat. When I say familiarity I think that kind of makes me think a bit more of, like I know them and I'm not sure that's what I mean</p>   |   |
| Welsh and Flow  | <p>although there is this kind of I think, joint understanding about 'oh yes we both know Welsh or whatever, maybe we have some understanding of cultural backgrounds or maybe there's that kind of aspect of the familiarity of knowing what it means to speak the language, knowing about some kinds of cultural aspects, knowing that if I say this or if I say that it will make sense. So I suppose in terms of familiarity, even though I want to say it's not there it is there, or I feel it's there. But I think it's more than that. I think there's a rhythm to the language because when I'm speaking Welsh I just feel like I'm dancing to a different rhythm to when I'm speaking English. It's very hard for me to explain, but it does feel present in the relationship. I don't want to say that we're on the same wavelength because that's not what it is.</p> | <p>Familiarity is described as more of a rhythm – almost like a beat and moving to a particular beat – <u>so it's a specific beat/ it's recognisable?</u></p> <p>Speaking Welsh – like moving from one beat to another and being on the same beat – <u>flow/progression/similarity/familiarity Sameness/being on the same page/understanding each other?</u></p>  |
| Welsh and joint understanding/ cultural background    | <p>that it will make sense. So I suppose in terms of familiarity, even though I want to say it's not there it is there, or I feel it's there. But I think it's more than that. I think there's a rhythm to the language because when I'm speaking Welsh I just feel like I'm dancing to a different rhythm to when I'm speaking English. It's very hard for me to explain, but it does feel present in the relationship. I don't want to say that we're on the same wavelength because that's not what it is.</p>   | <p>Familiarity – her sense of familiarity makes her think of a sense of '<i>knowing them</i>' and she is uncertain if that's what she means</p>   |
| Dancing to a different rhythm in English – difference | <p>I: It's a rhythm, and it's like dancing to a rhythm or a beat and I'm wondering what that rhythm does within that space or within that relationship?</p> <p>Well I suppose that links back to the kind of familiarity aspect of it. Something I suppose safe and comforting about it. Like the way I might talk to other Welsh people. When I'm speaking to a friend or a family member there's a particular rhythm of speaking, it's not really about the content of what is being</p>  | <p>Welsh and joint understanding– maybe they have some understanding of cultural backgrounds or a familiarity of each others' background – <u>joint understanding or familiarity / being aware of cultural backgrounds – is this absent therefore with English speakers? / a sense of understanding each other and where we come from – she is more aware/midful/attentive as a result?</u></p> <p><i>'Knowing what it means' – a sense of certainty – because she knows and has experience of it. Awareness and knowledge of it which subsequently informs her – but what does it mean to speak Welsh?</i></p> |
| Rhythm – link to                                      |   | <p>Welsh language – has a rhythm to it</p> <p><i>Repetition of 'rhythm'</i></p> <p><u>Rhythmic – pattern of regular beats/music/movement or procedure with uniform or patterned</u></p>   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>familiarity/<br/>safety/comfort</p> <p>Welsh - Safety and familiarity in counselling relationship</p> <p>Rhythm adds to safety aspect</p> | <p>said, it's more about the rhythm of speaking and the kind of comfort level of that and it feeling safe, comfortable, familiar in that I know the feeling, not that I know the person and I know that feeling. Speaking this way it feels safe and comforting. And I think that's what it's like in the counselling relationship. That kind of transfers some kind of a safety, familiarity to it. 'Oh I know this rhythm, I've felt it before, it comes from a safe place, this is OK'. I think it adds to that kind of safety aspect of it.</p> | <p><u>recurrence of a beat, accent or the like</u><br/> <i>Dancing – moving rhythmically / performing?</i><br/>         Difference – dancing to a different rhythm compared to when speaking English / <u>so it feels different</u><br/>         Very difficult for her to explain it but it feels very present in the relationship / its apparent/its there</p> <p>Impact of rhythm in counselling relationship – link to familiarity – the rhythm creates safety and its comforting</p> <p>Welsh – a particular rhythm of speaking – it's specific. It's not about what is being said – it's about the rhythm + there is a comfort level – safe, comfortable, familiar = she knows the feeling (its' familiar to her)<br/> <u>This is like what its like (the above) in the counselling relationship too – transferring safety and familiarity because there is joint understanding / recognising the rhythm which is understood by both people – because it's been felt/experienced before and coming from a place of safety and its okay</u></p> <p><u>The rhythm adds to the safety aspect of it?</u></p> |
|--|---|--|



## **Appendix 9**

Emerging Themes for Participants.

### **Emergent Themes for Participant 1: Delyth**

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Linguistic Familiarity/Unfamiliarity        | Identity and Culture                 |
| Different Sense of Self                     | Power dynamic                        |
| Mother tongue and ease                      | Welsh and flow                       |
| Choice to clients                           | Different way of being               |
| Welsh clients and ease                      | Passage of Time                      |
| Inadequacy/lack of confidence               | Block to empathy                     |
| Equalising power                            | Safety and trust                     |
| Flow and rhythm                             | Language proficiency                 |
| UPR and second language                     | English part – connected to emotions |
| More effort                                 | Counselling in bilingual context     |
| Unfamiliar Welsh vocabulary                 | Feeling more 'at home' in Welsh      |
| Welsh & English self                        | Translation process                  |
| Pre-existing understanding in mother tongue | Welsh words and shared understanding |
| Benefits of being bilingual                 | Language of training                 |

### **Emergent Themes for Participant 2: Lowri**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Connection / Distance                         | Identity and Culture                         |
| Cultural understanding                        | Different sense of self                      |
| Mother tongue and ease                        | Immediacy of connection in Welsh             |
| Familiarity/lack of familiarity/over-familiar | Empathy and understanding                    |
| Welsh clients and ease                        | Language switching                           |
| Flow/natural                                  | Flexibility                                  |
| Benefit of being bilingual                    | Safety and trust                             |
| Choice to clients                             | Language proficiency                         |
| UPR and second language                       | Passage of time                              |
| Pre-existing bond                             | More connection to feelings in mother tongue |
| Counselling in English – more formal          | Pre-existing understanding in Welsh          |
| More effort in English                        | Danger of over-familiarity in Welsh          |
| Balancing act                                 | Awareness and self-reflection                |
| Welsh self-younger/childish self              | English self – mature/professional           |
| Impact of different self on clients           | Language of training                         |

### **Emergent Themes for Participant 3: Efa**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Translation process                | Word searching                          |
| Identity                           | Culture                                 |
| Different sense of self            | Flow/ease in Welsh                      |
| Historical and cultural influences | Delay/immediacy in forming relationship |

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Impact of linguistic competence | Flexibility                                  |
| Choice to clients               | Options                                      |
| Safety                          | Language switching                           |
| Passage of time                 | Confidence/lack of confidence                |
| Benefits of being bilingual     | Negative impact of internal process          |
| Self-doubt                      | Insufficient listening                       |
| More effort in English          | Projection/transference                      |
| Welsh clients and closeness     | Welsh clients and pre-existing understanding |
| Practice and experience         | Skills and competency                        |
| Familiarity and confidence      | Language of training                         |
| Trust                           | Lack of experience                           |

#### **Emergent Themes for Participant 4: Gwion**

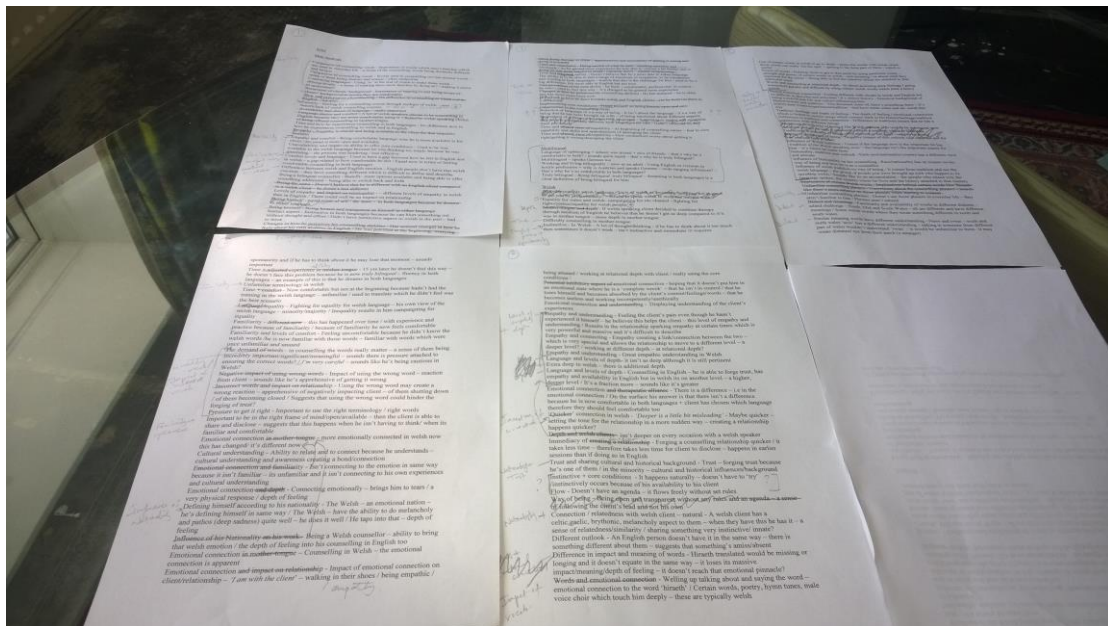
|  |  |
|--|--|
| Identity   | Culture  |
| Minority and inequality                          | Flow   |
| Welsh clients and sense of ease                  | Cultural understanding                                       |
| Heightened emotional connection in mother tongue | Levels of empathy  |
| Relational depth                                 | Passage of time  |
| Immediacy of connection in Welsh                 | Relatedness  |
| Linguistic capability                            | Words and emotional connection                               |
| Familiarity/unfamiliarity                        | Comfort gap  |
| Translation process                              | Unfamiliar Welsh terminology                                 |
| Benefit of being bilingual                       | Connecting through lingo                                     |
| Dialect  | Flexibility  |
| Giving clients choice                            | Mother tongue and existing understanding                     |
| Sense of self                                    | More effort  |
| Safety   | Historical/traditional understanding and connection in Welsh |

#### **Emergent Themes for Participant 5: Nia**

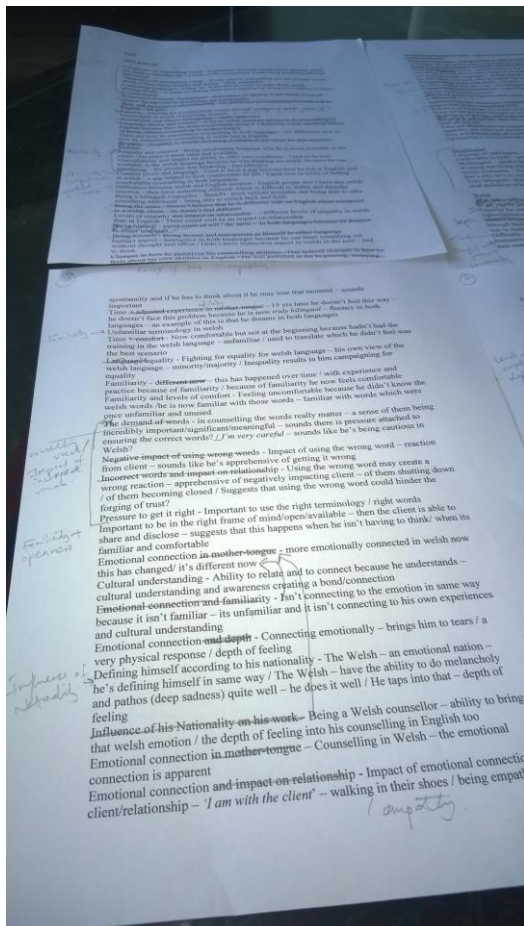
|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Familiarity/unfamiliarity        | Confidence                              |
| Identity                         | Sense of self                           |
| Culture/History/tradition        | Language of training                    |
| 'At home' in mother tongue       | Accessibility of self-soothing in Welsh |
| Benefits of being bilingual      | Flexibility                             |
| Giving clients choice            | Options                                 |
| View of linguistic competence    | Pressure associated with mother tongue  |
| Pre-existing connection and bond | Acceleration of trust in Welsh          |
| Empathy                          | Relational Depth                        |
| Assumed safety in Welsh          | Equalising power with mother tongue     |
| Equality                         | Acceleration of closeness               |
| Passage of Time                  | Trust                                   |
| Ease                             | More effort required                    |

## Appendix 10

### Mini analysis and example of Emergent Themes for Gwion:

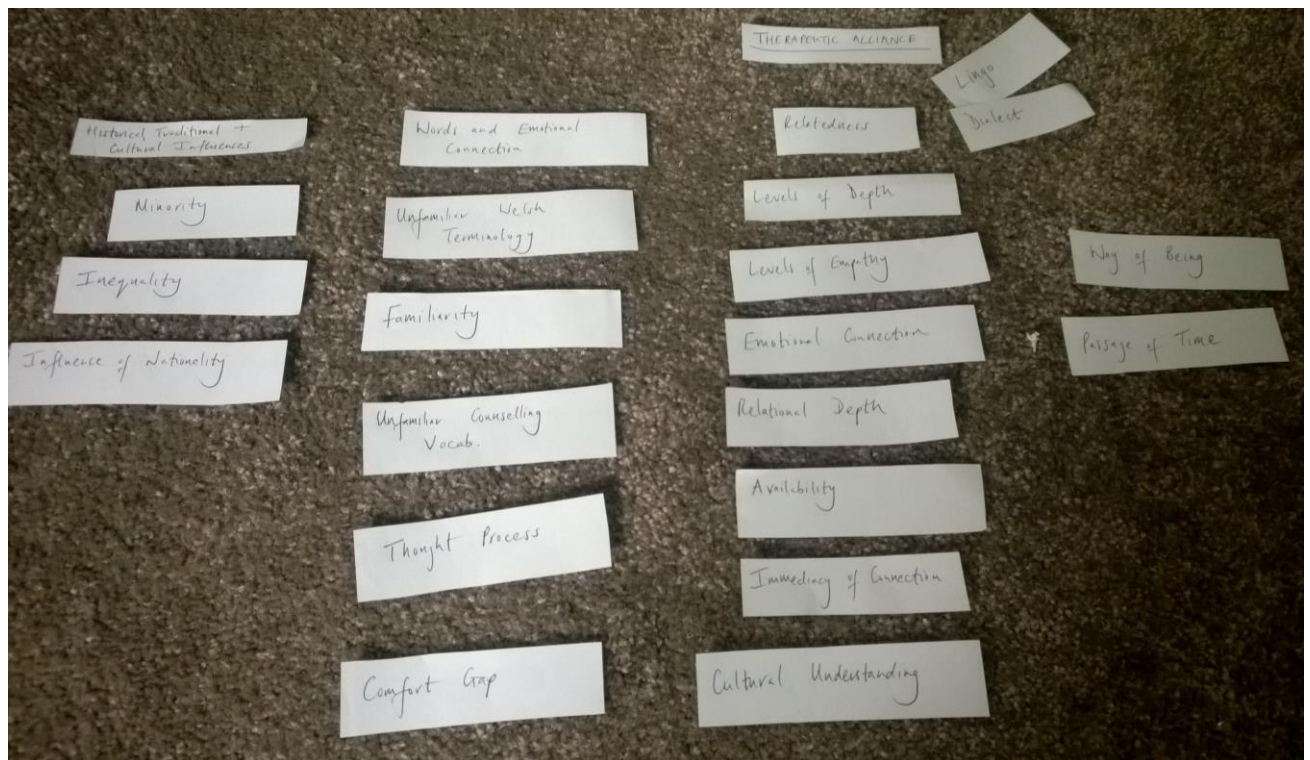


### Close up of Themes:



## Appendix 11

Developing themes for Gwion:



## **Appendix 12**

Developing clustered themes into super-ordinate themes.

### **Participant 1. Delyth**

#### **1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience**

Identity

Different sense of self

Nationality

Welsh self – related to childhood

English self – related to education and profession

Familiarity/unfamiliarity

Language of training

Different way of being

Passage of time / Changes

#### **2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance**

Pre-existing understanding in Welsh

Shared understanding – cultural background

Sense of ease/less effort/relaxed with Welsh clients

Safety and comfort

Trust

Power dynamic

UPR and second language

Awareness of verbal and non-verbal cues

#### **3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship**

Unfamiliar feeling/emotion Welsh words

Block to empathy

Lack of confidence

View of linguistic capability

Self-doubt

Power dynamic

More effort in forging relationship

Reassuring stance towards English clients

#### **4. Facilitative uses of being a Bilingual Therapist**

Options

Flexibility

Choice

Language switching

Advantages

## **Participant 2. Lowri**

### **1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience**

Flow/natural  
Familiarity / lack of familiarity / over familiarity  
Language of training  
Changes / passage of time  
Identity  
Different sense of self

### **2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance**

Closeness and distance  
Safety and Trust  
Ease  
Detachment  
Emotional connection / or lack of  
Pre-existing cultural understanding  
Immediacy of connection / forming bond

### **3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship**

Lack of familiarity and over familiarity  
Extra effort – to create a bond  
Cultural detachment  
Lack of cultural understanding  
Linguistic proficiency  
Distance  
Lack of empathy

### **4. Facilitative uses of being a Bilingual Therapist**

Language switching  
Flexibility  
Choice

## **Participant 3: Efa**

### **1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience**

Identity  
Different sense of self  
Familiar language of training  
Changes/ passage of time  
Culture

### **2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance**

Flow  
Pre-existing understanding in Welsh

Cultural understanding  
Ease / natural  
Trust  
Delay/Immediacy in development of relationship

### 3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship

Lack of self-confidence  
Lack of linguistic competence  
Self-doubt  
Internal Process of Translation  
More effort

### 4. Facilitative uses of being a Bilingual Therapist

Choice  
Language switching  
Options  
Flexibility

## **Participant 4: Gwion**

### 1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience

Identity  
Familiar language of training  
Changes / passage of time  
Sense of Self  
Culture / history / tradition  
Minority culture

### 2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance

Pre-existing understanding in Welsh  
Sense of ease in Welsh  
Safety and trust  
Different levels of Empathy  
Relational Depth in Welsh  
Immediacy of Connection

### 3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship

View of linguistic capability  
More effort  
Unfamiliar Welsh counselling vocabulary  
Translation process

### 4. Facilitative uses of being a Bilingual Therapist

Options  
Flexibility

Choice

**Participant 5: Nia**

**1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience**

Identity

Sense of self

Culture

Minority culture /language

History

Familiarity / language of counselling training

Language labels/associations

**2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance**

Pre-existing understanding and connection in Welsh

Ease

Acceleration of trust in Welsh

Assumed Safety in Welsh

Acceleration of closeness

Relational depth

Power and mother tongue

**3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship**

Unfamiliar Welsh counselling terminology

Perceived insufficiency

Linguistic proficiency

More effort

**4. Facilitative uses of being a Bilingual Therapist**

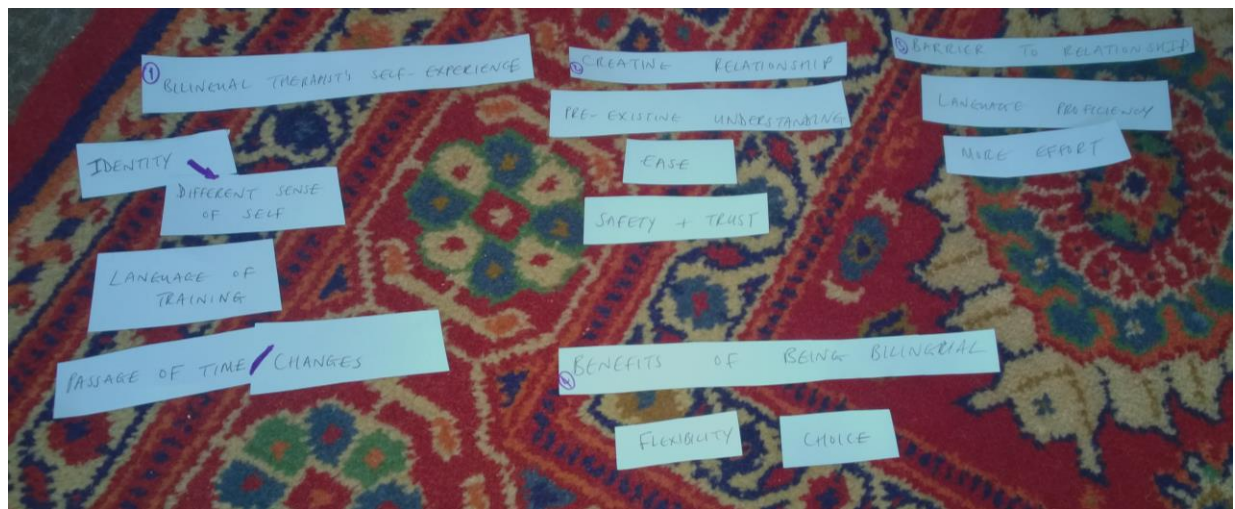
Flexibility

Choice



## Appendix 13

Super-Ordinate Themes for participants:



## Appendix 14

Super-Ordinate themes with Sub-themes. Audit of data for all participants.

|   |        |    |
|---|--------|----|
| <b><u>1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience</u></b>   |        |    |
| <i>Sub-Theme 1: Professional Identity Development</i>   |        |    |
| "In Welsh I am more expressive, friendly, chatty, talk faster than in English when I'm a bit less expressive and probably a bit more professional."   | Delyth | 27 |
| "They are maybe different parts of myself."   | Delyth | 27 |
| "I notice that the English part if maybe more connected to a professional and educational capacity and the Welsh part is more connected to childhood."  | Delyth | 27 |
| "I imagine that I'm a younger therapist when I'm speaking Welsh, and I'm probably an older therapist when I'm speaking English because Welsh is my mother tongue, the language I spoke when I was a baby and a toddler and English I would connect more with secondary school, work and training therefore I'm probably an older self." | Lowri  | 15 |
| "Maybe it's like working with someone a lot more childish in Welsh and someone more mature in English."   | Lowri  | 15 |
| "It's a different sense I think, because it doesn't feel as comfortable and I'm not truly being myself maybe because I have to think more. I'm me in Welsh, I can be me, I can talk like I want to talk, it flows freely, and I'm more comfortable."  | Efa    | 14 |
| "I think I'm not truly being myself in English maybe because I have to think."  | Efa    | 14 |
| "I think it's more me in Welsh I think, more relaxed and more confident."   | Efa    | 14 |
| "In my younger less experienced self I could see myself feeling more caught up in fear of judgement and holding a role that dropped away when I could speak my mother tongue, by now I'm not convinced that that's quite so strong."  | Nia    | 19 |
| "Being bilingual, truly bilingual as in dreaming in both languages I think I'm being myself in both languages, because I dream in either and I didn't dream in Welsh and translate it into English. So I think I'm being honest and transparent as me in either."   | Gwion  | 23 |
| <i>Sub-Theme 2: Familiarity and Language of Training</i>  |        |    |
| "I'm really familiar with talking about feelings in English, it's what I'm used to."  | Delyth | 9  |
| "It's the language I first started counselling in and I never felt uncomfortable counselling in it."  | Delyth | 38 |
| "When I'm counselling adults I prefer it in English because it  |        |    |

|   |        |    |
|---|--------|----|
| was the language I was taught to counsel in and therefore I can put my theories into practice.”   | Lowri  | 21 |
| ”Because the training was putting you in English, English, English and therefore to do it into Welsh instinctively, bang, wasn’t available.”  | Gwion  | 24 |
| ”My education and training had been in English.”  | Nia    | 3  |
| ”I feel more confident in my grammar in English, so I struggle sometimes, when I’m working with a Welsh client because my grammar is more limited.”   | Nia    | 13 |
| ”So when you speak English you kind of try and translate everything so it takes more time to kind of get the words out and that’s where I struggle sometimes, obviously because Welsh is my first language and I’m much more comfortable talking and working in Welsh.” | Efa    | 4  |
| ”Obviously my studies were through the medium of English so it’s familiar to me.”   | Efa    | 16 |
| <i>Sub-Theme 3: Passage of Time</i>   |        |    |
| ”It’s also practice. I’ve been counselling for many years so it’s become more natural, it’s become less of an issue, it’s become more comfortable and I’m probably a lot more confident.”   | Lowri  | 10 |
| ”It’s, it’s changed, it’s changed a lot over the years.”  | Lowri  | 10 |
| ”It’s very different now. Which language do you speak with your client? Sometimes I can’t remember, so that’s how it is now, I can’t even remember now, I have to think sometimes, What did I speak with that client in the room? So I obviously don’t notice anymore.” | Lowri  | 11 |
| ”The more I do it the more I learn and the easier it gets and you do get more confident and your skills develop over time.”   | Efa    | 16 |
| ”I think the more, the more I do it, the better it is.”   | Efa    | 16 |
| ”As time has passed and now that I’ve spent a lot of time away in England and married to an English speaking person I’m very comfortable talking in English now, it’s what I’m used to.”  | Delyth | 9  |
| ”I think just the volume of years of working with people, perhaps when I first started it was more of an issue that you know when I was less confident.”  | Nia    | 16 |
| ”I’m fifty seven, by now I think I’m getting more and more congruent, less and less caught up in how I appear, and more and more just think well this is how I am”.   | Nia    | 17 |
| ”In the beginning it was very difficult, surprising to me how difficult it was. But now it’s just familiarity, sheer practice, simple as. I’ve just kicked into that area where I’m just comfortable.”  | Gwion  | 24 |
| <b><u>2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance</u></b>  |        |    |
| <i>Sub-Theme 1: Mother tongue and Pre-existing Understanding</i>  |        |    |

|   |        |    |
|---|--------|----|
| <p>"There are things that we will not have to explain, there are things that I'll understand the connotations, the cultural connotations will be understood without words and it felt a bit like an elastic band between us and that we can connect."</p>   | Lowri  | 5  |
| <p>"We have an understanding of each others culture. If I'm counselling through English it's a different culture which I also understand and know, because I'm also a part of that, but it doesn't connect to my feelings and emotions culturally and therefore it is a different experience."</p>  | Lowri  | 5  |
| <p>"It's the language of my feelings and emotions and that's why I suppose. UM -- it taps into me because that's my identity, so I'm tapping into their identity quicker, because there's that familiarity, there's that understanding through words."</p>  | Lowri  | 6  |
| <p>"There is this kind of I think, joint understanding, maybe we have some understanding of cultural backgrounds or maybe there's that kind of aspect of the familiarity of it, knowing what it means to speak the language."</p>   | Delyth | 19 |
| <p>"We've got our own kind of phrases that we use, our own language and because you're from the same area, you use the same lingo kind of thing. I think it relaxes the client more because they probably think 'oh yeah she's from here, she talks like I do', it might kind of make you feel a bit closer to that person, I think."</p> | Efa    | 11 |
| <p>"There is a Celtic, Gaelic, Brythonic, melancholy and whatever that's available, and if the client has it I have it. It's almost history, it's almost two thousand years of, there's something there."</p>   | Gwion  | 32 |
| <p>"It is almost tribal, it's like with your family or something like that. There's a familiarity or an informality that can happen. I think it's something to do with that really, that there's a sense of mutual trust."</p>  | Nia    | 8  |
| <i>Sub-Theme 2: Ease</i>  |        |    |
| <p>"I keep wanting to go lower, keep wanting to drop my shoulders when I'm thinking about being with Welsh clients, so maybe I am a bit more relaxed."</p>  | Delyth | 24 |
| <p>"Because this elastic band kind of feel is natural when it happens through Welsh."</p>   | Lowri  | 7  |
| <p>"I think it's more natural, I feel more comfortable, I think it flows more natural I think than in English."</p>   | Efa    | 4  |
| <p>"I find it easier speaking and working in Welsh because it's my first language and I feel much more comfortable speaking Welsh."</p>   | Efa    | 4  |
| <p>"It can feel more at ease more quickly, I think it's not so much that it doesn't happen in either language I think it's that sometimes it seems to click in a lot more quickly when you're straight into your mother tongue."</p>  | Nia    | 8  |
| <p>"That I would say is something instinctive, you blurt out something, that's the moment that's the test and if you have it</p>  | Gwion  | 23 |

|  |        |    |
|--|--------|----|
| and you don't have to think about it, that's something that I didn't have in the beginning and over time has come in the Welsh language."  |        |    |
| <i>Sub-Theme 3: Safety and Trust</i>   |        |    |
| "It's more about the rhythm of speaking and the kind of comfort level of that and it feeling safe, comfortable, familiar and comforting and I think that's what it's like in the counselling relationship, that kind of transfers some kind of a safety and familiarity. I know this rhythm, I've felt it before, it comes from a safe place, this is okay."                       | Delyth | 22 |
| "Well I suppose that links back to the kind of familiarity aspect of it. Something I suppose safe and comforting about it, like the way in which, the rhythm in which I might talk to other Welsh people."   | Delyth | 22 |
| "It feels, I suppose it feels comfortable, safe and it feels warm because there's that unspoken understanding."  | Lowri  | 17 |
| "I think there's an element of trust as well that comes in a bit more because we're smaller in number, we're a smaller group and I think that, 'oh we've got a Cymraeg here'."   | Gwion  | 22 |
| "I do think there are moments where it becomes apparent to me that there is something about relating to one and other in our first language that allows a sense of trust to come in, or some kind of dropping of defenses."  | Nia    | 10 |
| "But there is a sense of familiarity that seems to help the trust issues and I do feel that for some people, knowing that they can talk to me in their mother tongue, they feel and I feel as if they trust me more quickly."  | Nia    | 15 |
| "I think if you're there and you're relaxed, you're confident, I think clients' then feel more trusting of you."   | Efa    | 18 |
| <b><u>3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship</u></b>   |        |    |
| <i>Sub-Theme 1: Impact of Language Proficiency</i>   |        |    |
| "And sometimes, regular people like me we don't use the fancy Welsh words, and then there's the pressure then, you've chosen to do this in Welsh, we have to use all these big words and I can't use English".   | Delyth | 17 |
| "There's some kind of physical connection to emotional feeling words that I think I feel when that word is English, that I don't feel when that particular word is said in Welsh. And then, so maybe there is a bit of a block to empathy or kind of being with a client, understanding, connecting to their feeling, there may be a bit of a block with that sometimes in Welsh." | Delyth | 17 |
| "I feel more ironically I'm more articulate in English because my Welsh isn't as correct as it might be. So, in Welsh I find myself using English words sometimes, and I might say, depends if my client feels like they speak really good Welsh I will apologise in advance, I might say oh look I'm sorry you'll find me slipping  | Nia    | 6  |

|  |        |    |
|--|--------|----|
| English words in. I feel a deficiency in my grammar in Welsh, so I feel more articulate in English.”   |        |    |
| “It would be more complex to try and more complicated translating the theoretical side of things, back into a language that wasn’t used whilst I was training.”  | Lowri  | 21 |
| “You think oh maybe that came out wrong and maybe I’m not doing what I should be doing properly. Sometimes I can be quite hard on myself and I should have said this or that, so maybe that kind of has an impact on me.”  | Efa    | 6  |
| “I think it comes down to a part of the Welsh dictionary that I was not familiar with.”  | Gwion  | 13 |
| “I don’t think I was that available in the Welsh language because I was thinking too much, because I was translating and I think that’s something I notice now because those empathic moments come more frequently.”   | Gwion  | 14 |
| <i>Sub-Theme 2: More effort</i>  |        |    |
| “So there’s less immediate I think understanding of what the word actually means to that person and then there’s more kind of needing of the other things as well, to kind of get the meaning more. There’s greater need maybe for like how they look, how they say it, the stuff that comes out with it, and there’s more work to kind of get to it.” | Delyth | 36 |
| “I suppose it’s harder work, so creating that relationship, creating that bond with someone that isn’t aware of these cultural issues takes more work.”  | Lowri  | 7  |
| “Because you have to think and translate, it’s more difficult. It gets more tiring because you don’t want to miss anything but you’re thinking about what you want to say in Welsh back, but having to still think about listening in English, so that could probably have an impact on the relationship.”   | Efa    | 27 |
| “What I did was, I looked at my training manual and translated literally the phrase and got the meaning of it as opposed to the dictionary translation.”   | Gwion  | 41 |
| “I struggle sometimes, when I’m working with a Welsh client for example to be able to reflect accurately back because my grammar is more limited.”   | Nia    | 13 |
| <b>4. Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist</b>   |        |    |
| <i>Sub-Theme 1: Flexibility</i>  |        |    |
| “I think it really gives me a lot of options as a counsellor, with Welsh speaking and English speaking clients. It allows me to move from one language to the other therefore I’m able to offer choice to my clients within a session, from one session to the other, I think that’s pretty important.”  | Delyth | 48 |
| “But working with bilingual clients, we will change from sentence to sentence sometimes without noticing that we’re doing it, and it’s more often that clients will come in and ask to   | Lowri  | 13 |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>speak English and then change to Welsh, that's the norm."</p> <p>"I'm counselling that person in English and they will switch into Welsh, especially when they're talking about childhood and that I think is a great service that I'm able to offer that another counsellor wouldn't be able to offer."</p> <p>"There's not a lot of Welsh speaking counsellors and I've noticed as well I get more referrals, all the Welsh speakers say can you take this one on so it is a benefit for me, because I can work in both languages and a lot of people can't."</p> <p>"I hope it makes me more flexible and it gives me some insight into respect for cultural differences and the importance of people being able to have a choice about the way they communicate their feelings."</p> <p><i>Sub-Theme 2: Choice</i></p> <p>"We often start off for example speaking one and changing to the other and vice versa and we have a discussion around that, we never do it without me checking out, are you OK with this? Is it more comfortable? Is it less? Do you want to go back?"</p> <p>"So kind of being conscious about working with adolescents and really working to equalise that power relationship and language being one of those aspects. What language do you want to speak in? You have your say in how this thing here is being conducted, this is your choice, it's one of the ways in which to kind of pass on the kind of control."</p> <p>"But like I said I think it's really important especially for the clients around here as well, for them to be able to have their therapy in their first language."</p> <p>"I think it's important that the possibility or the availability is there for the client to choose."</p> <p>"Because I've been able to speak both languages but whenever I meet a new client, if they want to speak in Welsh I speak in Welsh with them, if they want to speak in English I speak in English. Yeah so, I feel responsive to the demand."</p> | <p>Gwion</p> <p>Efa</p> <p>Nia</p> <p>Lowri</p> <p>Delyth</p> <p>Efa</p> <p>Gwion</p> <p>Nia</p> | <p>21</p> <p>29</p> <p>26</p> <p>11</p> <p>41</p> <p>29</p> <p>10</p> <p>5</p> |
|---|--|--|

## Appendix 15

Key text with page/number.

Participant: Efa.

| Themes  | Page/Line | Key Data   |
|---|-----------|--|
| <b><u>Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist</u></b>              |           |  |
| Language switching  | 3/23      | We switch from one language to the other   |
| Advantage<br>Flexibility  | 29/293    | There's not a lot of Welsh speaking counsellors and I've noticed as well I get more referrals, all the Welsh speakers say can you take this one on so it is a benefit for me, because I can work in both languages and a lot of people can't |
| Choice to clients   | 29/297    | I think it's really important especially for the clients around here as well, for them to be able to have their therapy in their first language  |
| <b><u>Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance</u></b> |           |  |
| Identity/Sense of self  | 12/127    | it feels more comfortable like I said, it's more relaxed   |
| Identity/Welsh Sense of self  | 13/133    | I think in Welsh obviously I'm me in Welsh, I can be me, I can talk like I want to talk, it flows freely, and I feel more comfortable.   |
| Different Sense of Self<br>English Sense of Self                            | 14/147    | It's different because it's still me but it's different, it's a different sense I think. It doesn't feel as comfortable in English   |
| English Sense of Self /Not her true Self                                    | 14/149    | I think I'm not truly being myself in English maybe because I have to think more   |
| Welsh Sense of Self / True Self   | 14/152    | I think it's more me in Welsh I think, more relaxed and more confident   |
| Ease in mother tongue   | 3/26      | I find it easier speaking and working in Welsh because it's my first language and I feel much more comfortable   |



|  |        |  |
|--|--------|--|
|  |        | speaking Welsh   |
| Ease in mother tongue                                | 4/41   | I think in Welsh it's more natural, I feel more comfortable. I think it flows more natural I think than in English   |
| Natural/mother tongue                                | 4/44   | In Welsh it's more natural I think   |
| Natural/mother tongue                                | 5/58   | When I counsel in Welsh, I think that it's more natural. I feel more comfortable, I'm not as, maybe not as nervous   |
| Mother tongue and pre-existing understanding         | 11/114 | We've got our own kind of phrases that we use, our own language and because you're from the same area, you use the same lingo  |
| Mother tongue and pre-existing understanding         | 11/114 | I think it relaxes the client more because they probably think 'oh yeah she's from here, she talks like I do', it might kind of make you feel a bit closer to that person  |
| Immediacy in mother tongue                           | 15/156 | I think in Welsh you click with the person. I think in English for me maybe there's a slight delay in that relationship  |
| Connection and mother tongue                         | 20/217 | I think you do feel more connected to someone that speaks in the same language as you  |
| Closeness and mother tongue                          | 20/221 | You feel closer to that person in some way   |
| Commonality/relating in Welsh                        | 20/225 | You're from the same area we've got something in common  |
| Safety and trust                                     | 18/186 | I think if you're there and you're relaxed, you're confident, I think clients then feel more trusting of you   |
| <b><u>Barrier to Counselling Relationship</u></b>    |        |  |
| Lack of linguistic proficiency<br>Negative self-talk | 6/62   | <p>You think oh maybe that came out wrong and maybe I'm not doing what I should be doing properly. Sometimes I can be quite hard on myself and I should have said this or that, so maybe that kind of has an impact on me</p> <p>Maybe it doesn't sound as good in</p> |

|   |        |   |
|---|--------|---|
| Self-doubt<br>Negative self-talk  | 6/68   | English as it would in Welsh, and then you think oh maybe that came out wrong but, not all the time, but a lot of the time I think that happens   |
| Self-critical   | 6/72   | Sometimes I can be quite hard on myself when I think oh that didn't come out right when I should have said this   |
| More effort in second language  | 9/93   | Just having to think more than I would in Welsh and I think it kind of makes me more tired as well, it makes it more draining because you have to think and translate and it's more difficult   |
| Second language requires more attentiveness                                       | 10/104 | It's more difficult kind of when you work with someone that's English. You have to listen and kind of register more than you would in Welsh, so that's where the being more drained comes from  |
| Lack of self-confidence<br>Impact   | 17/182 | It kind of makes the client more nervous I think and the more confident you are I think it's easier for the clients then to feel more relaxed   |
| More effort in second language  | 27/273 | Because you have to think and translate, it's more difficult  |
| More effort in second language  | 28/289 | It gets more tiring because you don't want to miss anything but you're thinking about what you want to say in Welsh back, but having to still think about listening in English, so that could probably have an impact on the relationship |
| <b><u>The Bilingual Therapist's<br/>Language Related Self-<br/>Experience</u></b> |        |   |
| Familiarity & language of training  | 16/166 | Obviously my studies were through the medium of English so it's familiar to me  |
| Passage of time/Changes   | 16/169 | I think the more, the more I do it, the better it is<br><br>The more I do it the more I learn and   |

|                         |        |  |
|-------------------------|--------|--|
| Passage of time/Changes | 16/172 | the easier it gets and you do get more confident and your skills develop over time |
|-------------------------|--------|--|

## **Appendix 16**

Table of Super-Ordinate Themes and Sub Themes.

| Super-ordinate themes  | Sub-themes  |
|--|---|
| 1. The Bilingual Therapist's Language Related Self-Experience    | a. Professional Identity Development<br>b. Familiarity and Language of Training<br>c. Passage of Time |
| 2. Therapist Self-Experiences of Creating a Therapeutic Alliance | a. Mother tongue and Pre-existing Understanding<br>b. Ease<br>c. Safety and Trust                     |
| 3. Barrier to Counselling Relationship                           | a. Impact of Language Proficiency<br>b. More effort   |
| 4. Facilitative Uses of Being a Bilingual Therapist              | a. Flexibility<br>b. Choice   |

## **Appendix 17**

Consent Form.



### **An exploration of bilingual (Welsh-English) person-centred counsellors experiences of counselling in a mother tongue and in a non-mother tongue language**

I.....hereby give my consent for the details of a written transcript based on an audio recorded interview with myself and Rhian Williams to be used in preparation and as part of a research dissertation for the MA in Clinical Counselling at the University of Chester. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous and that all personally identifiable information will remain confidential and separate from the research data. I further understand that the transcript will be seen by counselling tutors and the external examiner for the purposes of assessment, academic supervision and moderation. I also understand that all involved individuals are bound by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

I understand that a copy of the transcript will be sent to me to check for accuracy. I am aware that I can stop the interview at any time, or withdraw my participation up until the beginning of the writing up of the dissertation, without giving an explanation or fear of reprisal. All audio recordings and electronic copies will be deleted upon successful completion of the MA in Clinical Counselling, however a hard copy of the data will be kept for 5 years in accordance with Chester University regulations.

Excerpts from the transcript will be included in the dissertation. Copies of the dissertation will be held in the University of Chester Library and the Department of Social Studies and Counselling. It may also be available electronically via the online research repository.

Without my further consent, some or all of the material may be used for publication and/ or presentations at conferences and seminars. Every effort will be made to ensure complete anonymity.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet that has been provided and I have been given the opportunity to discuss any concerns or to ask for further explanation by the researcher. I believe that I have been given sufficient information about the nature of this research, including any possible risks, to give my informed consent to participate.

Signed (Participant).....Date.....

Signed  
(Researcher).....Date.....

## **Appendix 18**

### Brief Profiles of Participants.

| <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Qualified / Trainee</b> | <b>Brief Description</b>   |
|------------------|------------|---------------|----------------------------|--|
| Delyth           | 38         | Female        | Qualified                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives in North-West Wales</li> <li>• Describes Welsh as mother tongue &amp; comes from predominantly Welsh background</li> <li>• Learned English in primary school</li> <li>• Has been working as a counsellor for 4 years</li> <li>• Counsellor training was in English</li> <li>• Currently providing therapy in Welsh and in English</li> </ul>  |
| Lowri            | 50         | Female        | Qualified                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives in North Wales</li> <li>• Describes Welsh as mother tongue &amp; background, work, social and familial setting as predominantly Welsh</li> <li>• Learned English at an early age as a result of English family member</li> <li>• Has been working as a counsellor for 7 years</li> <li>• Counsellor training was in English</li> <li>• Currently providing therapy in Welsh and in English</li> </ul> |
| Efa              | 37         | Female        | Trainee                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives in North Wales</li> <li>• Describes Welsh as mother tongue &amp; language of upbringing and main relationships</li> <li>• Counsellor training is in English</li> <li>• Has been working as a counsellor for 4 months</li> <li>• Currently providing therapy in Welsh and in English</li> </ul>  |
| Gwion            | 63         | Male          | Qualified                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives in West Wales</li> <li>• Describes Welsh as mother tongue</li> <li>• Language of upbringing: school &amp; social life was mixed</li> <li>• Describes himself as trilingual: speaks English, Welsh and German fluently</li> <li>• Counsellor training was in English</li> <li>• Has been working as a counsellor for 15 years</li> <li>• Currently providing therapy</li> </ul>                        |

|     |    |        |           |  |
|-----|----|--------|-----------|--|
|     |    |        |           | in Welsh and in English  |
| Nia | 56 | Female | Qualified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lives in North-West Wales</li> <li>• Describes Welsh as mother tongue</li> <li>• Born and raised in a predominantly Welsh speaking environment</li> <li>• Learned English by she was 4-5 years old</li> <li>• Fluctuating use of mother tongue throughout adult life</li> <li>• Counsellor training was in English</li> <li>• Has been working as a counsellor for 25 years</li> <li>• Currently providing therapy in Welsh and in English</li> </ul> |